

THE BACKROOM BOYS

I

If the next edition of the Pentagon Papers is to contain an epigraph, I would suggest a remark by a war correspondent who is unusual, if not unique, in her concern for the Vietnamese and detailed reporting on the meaning of the war to them. A year of exposure to the Nixon-Kissinger war, the one that is winding down, left her with "a deep, angry suspicion and scorn" for the White House, the Pentagon, the Army, the Diplomats, the experts in Vietnam, "for among them are some stunning lunatics and liars who have done their own country much damage, and nearly killed this one."¹

The Pentagon Papers have a cool and antiseptic quality that readers may find revolting if they are at all aware of the reality that seems so remote from the minds of the planners in Washington. At least, that was my personal reaction. Perhaps that is why, after closing volume IV, I found myself thumbing through a study of the real Vietnam by the British photographer-writer Philip Jones Griffiths.² His technique is simple, and effective. On one page there is a photograph of a serious-looking American pilot with a skull on his helmet, and facing it, a victim of napalm, with a brief text:

Some of its finer selling points were explained to me by a pilot in 1966: "We sure are pleased with those backroom boys at Dow. The original product wasn't so hot -- if the gooks were quick they could scrape it off. So the boys started adding polystyrene -- now it sticks like shit to a blanket. But then if the gooks jumped under water it stopped burning, so they started adding Willie Peter [WP -- white phosphorus] so's to make it burn better. It'll even burn under water now. And just one drop is enough, it'll keep on burning right down to the bone so they die anyway from phosphorus poisoning."

The Pentagon Papers do not deal with murder and destruction. They are not -- nor do they purport to be -- a history of the war or of the American involvement in Indochina. But they do provide much insight into the thinking and machinations of the backroom boys who bear the primary responsibility for

a catastrophe of which they seem unaware. The study deals not with the war, but with the perception of the war in Washington, a rather different matter. The account is sometimes inaccurate and misleading, reflecting what the policy-makers persuaded themselves to believe. The relative attention given to various phases of the conflict also reflects the perception of Washington, rather than the significance of the events themselves.

There is, for example, much agonizing over the air war in North Vietnam. In contrast, the bombing of the South, far greater in scale, is barely mentioned. "It takes time to make hard decisions," John McNaughton wrote: "It took us almost ³ a year to take the decision to bomb North Vietnam." The decision is studied in painstaking detail. There is scarcely a word about the decision to bomb South Vietnam, at greater than triple the intensity by 1966 (IV, 49). A few ~~remarks~~ ^{remarks} prior to February 1965 indicate some interest in "explicit use of US air in South Viet-Nam..." (III, 618) -- inexplicit use of helicopters and tactical air support for combat ~~operations~~ ^{operations} dates from 1960 and was extensive by early 1962⁴). These remarks are so insignificant that the Pentagon historians -- properly, given a narrow interpretation of their task -- do not enter them into their record of planning in Washington. In February 1965, "For the first time, U.S. jet aircraft were authorized to support the RVNAF in ground operations in ~~the~~ the South without restriction" (III, 391), and the roof fell in on the rural population of South Vietnam. From the third week of February, "jet bombers commenced attacks against Southern targets on a daily basis." This was the fundamental policy decision of early 1965. As Bernard Fall pointed out not long after, "what changed the character of the Vietnam war was not the decision to bomb North Vietnam; not the decision to use American ground troops in South Vietnam; but the decision to wage unlimited aerial warfare inside the country at the price of literally pounding the place to bits."⁵ But of this decision, we learn nothing. And only a few scattered sentences, to which we return, indicate the effects of the bombing.

The contrast is all the more remarkable given the fact that South Vietnam, beginning in early 1965, was subjected not only to massive aerial attack but also to artillery bombardment which ~~is~~ may well have been even more destructive. There is reported to be an extensive RAND Corporation study, still secret, that provides detailed evidence on ~~the~~ U.S. air and artillery tactics and ~~about~~ their effects on peasant attitudes and Viet Cong morale, based on interviews with prisoners, defectors, and refugees. It may well be an extension of the study introduced by Robert McNamara in Congressional testimony in January 1966. This report is ^{5a} concerned "especially to highlight some VC vulnerabilities which appear to provide opportunities for exploitation," for example, the vulnerability to ~~B-52~~ bombardment, by B-52's, "the most devastating and frightening weapons used so far against the VC": "VC soldiers and civilians said that they felt there is no protection against these attacks..." The report states that "The air and artillery attacks -- the latter being far more frequent than the former -- while disrupting VC activities and intensifying the cleavage between the population and the VC, often appear to cause [deleted] damage and casualties to the villagers [deleted]." ~~Because~~ The [deleted] damages and casualties ~~as the result of~~ lead the villagers "to move where they will be safe from such attacks," "regardless of their attitude to the GVN." This is very helpful. "The effects of the departure of large numbers of villagers for GVN areas are beginning to be felt," with a consequent reduction in manpower ~~available~~ available to the VC and the threat of "a major deterioration of their economic base." The report quotes a VC cadre: "Each person that moves out [of a VC area] will cause one VC to die of hunger." VC units find that they are "unable to buy food in abandoned villages." Thus the ~~popular~~ sea in which the guerrillas swim "is ~~now~~ receding." Things are looking up for our side. ^{5b}

The contrast in the Pentagon Papers between the attention to the decision to bomb the North and the decision to conduct extensive ~~bombing~~ aerial and artillery bombardment of the South is striking. The reason for the contrast seems clear enough. The bombing of North Vietnam was highly visible, very costly to the United States, and extremely dangerous, with a constant and perceived threat of general war. The far

more vicious bombing of the South, on the other hand, was merely destroying the rural society of South Vietnam, and thus did not merit the attention of the backroom boys.

As the subtitle indicates, this is a study of decision-making, nothing more. It does not deal with the results of decisions, except in terms of military success and cost -- cost, that is, to the planners and the interests they represent. There are no memoranda on bombs that tear the flesh with tiny arrows, designed to cause maximum pain and impossible to extract without grave injury. There are no scenes of cratered fields and poisoned rice paddy,⁶ no smell of burning flesh. We find no description of an old woman searching the rubble of her napalmed "hooch," or of a child, chained to a hospital bed, insane since the age of two when his mother was killed by a helicopter gunship, holding him in her arms. Nor is there a word of comment on the wreckage of the village society of Vietnam, or on life in the densely-packed urban slums to which villagers have fled because "They don't like our artillery and air strikes,"⁷ or because they are starving, or because they have been moved by force. Such sentimentality is far from the minds of the men whose thoughts are recorded in the Pentagon Study. No doubt they would regard with scorn the reaction of Gloria Emerson, quoted above. ^P The sense of remoteness from reality conveyed by the documentary record is heightened by the accompanying analysis. Two of the authors have commented on "the well carpeted stillness and isolation of those government offices where some of the Pentagon Papers were first written. The efficient staccato of the typewriter, the antiseptic whiteness of nicely margined memoranda, the affable, authoritative and always urbane men who wrote them -- all of it is a spiritual as well as geographic world apart from piles of decomposing bodies in a ditch outside Hue⁸ or a village bombed in Laos, the burn

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indent ward of a children's hospital in Saigon, or even a cemetery or veteran's hospital here."⁹

The essence of the Pentagon Papers is conveyed in a summary and analysis of the situation after the Tet offensive of 1968 (II, 414-5). The analyst ponders the question whether the United States can "overcome the apparent fact that the Viet Cong have 'captured' the Vietnamese nationalist movement while the GVN has become the refuge of Vietnamese who were allied with the French in the battle against the independence of their nation? Attempts to answer this question are complicated, of course, by the difficult ^{issue} ~~problem~~ of Viet Cong allegiance to and control by Communist China." He goes on to muse over "the question of the adequacy of counterinsurgent theory and doctrine" and the problem of "its transformation into operational reality," a "difficult, frustrating business," where "There exists no 'control' by which laboratory comparison of alternative courses can be made," but a problem that must be studied "in order better to guide future policy."

The United States, in short, is supporting the ^{former} ~~agents~~ of French colonialism against the nationalist movement captured -- by implication, illegitimately -- by the Viet Cong, like the Viet Minh before it. Twenty years earlier, a State Department policy statement noted that the Communists under Ho Chi Minh had "captur[ed] control of the nationalist movement," thus impeding the "long-term objective" of the United States, "to eliminate so far as possible Communist influence in Indochina."¹⁰ The biographies of Thieu, Ky, and Khiem indicate the continuity of policy; all served with the French forces.¹¹ This poses no moral dilemma, but rather a technical one. As Dean Acheson once explained, ~~the~~ "Question whether Ho ~~is~~ as much nationalist as Commie is irrelevant." He is an "outright Commie," and that is all that matters (besides, "All Stalinists in colonial areas are nationalists"; ~~the~~

~~_____~~ ^{DOD,} (book 8, 196). At worst, this fact poses one of those dilemmas of counter-insurgency, and as the theorists are quick to point out, ^{"All} ~~the~~ dilemmas are practical and as neutral in an ethical sense as the laws of physics."¹² If the children in a burn ward in the Quang Ngai hospital disagree, well, they probably don't understand the laws of physics either. By defining the problems as technical, one appears to be hard-headed and realistic, any moral considerations are displaced, and the public is effectively excluded, since clearly technical problems are to be left to experts.

Furthermore the technician who is concerned with transforming counterinsurgent theory into operational reality in the absence of ~~laboratory~~ ^{idea} control need not concern himself with the origin of the imbecile ~~_____~~ ^{may be} that the Viet Cong ~~_____~~ Chinese agents. This ^{"issue," a hypothesis} ~~_____~~ originating in someone else's department, merely sets the terms of the technical problem, which the counterinsurgent theorist is therefore free to address, understanding nothing. Facts are no more relevant to him than they were to Dean Acheson when he urged aid and recognition for the Bao Dai government in May 1949 to safeguard Vietnam from "aggressive designs Commie Chi" (^{DOD,} ~~_____~~ book 8, ¹⁹⁰⁻¹ ~~_____~~).

In fact, the function of the hypothesis is transparent: by assuming it, ~~_____~~ one can squarely face the problem of repressing the nationalist movement of Vietnam, untroubled by sentimental moral qualms, since the enemy is really China ¹³ (or perhaps the Kremlin, which is directing a "coordinated offensive" against Southeast Asia), not Vietnam. This kind of thinking, if that is the right word, goes a long way towards explaining the barbarism of the Vietnam war, in which the world's most advanced technology is pitted against the nationalist movement "captured" by the Viet Cong. If the backroom boys at Dow were forced to walk through the burn ward of a children's hospital they might think twice about what they are doing in their laboratories. |

It is conceivable that even the modern Metternich might be shaken by a face-to-face confrontation with refugees from the Plain of Jars, if one of his jaunts happened to bring him to the place where the fun and games are "transformed into operational reality." The same is true more generally of the planners in Washington and academia, insulated from the facts, posing as technical experts and problem solvers.¹⁴

The analyst noted above is, finally, perceptive in recognizing that the technical problem must be studied "in order (to) better guide future policy" in Indochina and elsewhere, in pursuit of a "stable world order" in which ~~the~~ the rights of the privileged will be guaranteed. Vietnam was seen as a great experiment, challenging and almost exhilarating, a laboratory of counterinsurgency and a test of the feasibility of "wars of national liberation" -- by definition, inspired by "international communism" when they take place within the "free world." Under the Kennedy administration, "there was an emphasis on counter guerrilla and counterrevolutionary training."¹⁵ Kissinger's doctrine of "limited war," extricated from its ~~original~~ rationalization in terms of great power conflict, is a natural theme of U. S. political-military global policy, given the relations between the industrialized countries and the developing world. Advanced technology makes a dual contribution. On the one hand, it provides the antipersonnel weapons, electronic battlefield, automated fire-control systems, and the like, all designed for wars against the weak. It also provides an intellectual framework to protect the decision-maker from any realization of what he is in fact doing and to deflect the attention of the public -- an important matter, since most people are not gangsters by nature and tend to be unhappy about murder and destruction. It is difficult to plot aggression "under the klieg lights of a democracy" (III, 648). How much more convenient it is merely to face technical problems, as neutral in an ethical sense as those of physics.

The technical pose also allows the ~~xxx~~ Pentagon historians to slip easily into unquestioning acceptance of the assumptions that guide the thinking of the policy planners themselves. Thus the Pentagon historians do not undertake to inquire seriously into the American role in world affairs and its long-term motives and objectives, nor do they try to place the material that they investigate in such meticulous detail within the more general context of post-war history. The resulting limitations of their work have been discussed by a number of critics. ^{15a} The documentary record indicates that these limitations are a faithful and often revealing reflection of the limitations within which the designers of policy operate. It is hardly surprising that policy planners raise no searching questions about the peoples whose lives and fate they manipulate, about the validity of their own beliefs or their own vision of a properly organized society, or about their right to act upon these beliefs to impose social and economic arrangements on others. Correspondingly, these planners see themselves not as ~~aggressors~~ imperialist aggressors, a hostile and disruptive force in some foreign ~~land~~. Rather, ~~the planners~~ the planners ~~xxx~~ defend civilized values and the status quo. They are victims, not agents, and merely respond to the initiatives of their great power rivals or of the obstinate, recalcitrant and perverse elements in foreign lands who do not bend to the ~~xxx~~ will of the superpower and even forcefully resist its ~~intrusions~~ ^{intrusions,} thereby becoming violent aggressors in their own homes. The technician who merely studies the day-by-day moves of the imperial planners can also easily avoid the painful questions that arise at once for anyone who extricates himself from the framework of official ideology.

The issues raised by the Pentagon Papers fall into several categories. There are, in the first place, questions relating to the public release of the material and the government response: the matter of executive privilege, the scope of the First Amendment, the rights and duties of a citizen. The contents of the study, too, bear directly on problems of law and conscience and legitimate social action. It is also important to explore the broader lasting value of this extraordinary collection of documents and analyses for the insight it provides into the mentality of the planners and the functioning of government, as well as its contribution to the historical record and to the understanding of the objectives of U.S. global strategy. All of these matters merit extensive study. I would like to comment on each of them, in the sequence just indicated.

II

Senator Sam Ervin, who has been conducting an inquiry into the separation of powers, observed recently that : "Throughout history, rulers have imposed secrecy on their actions in order to enslave the citizenry in bonds of ignorance. By contrast, a government whose actions are completely visible to all of its citizens best protects the freedoms embodied in the Constitution."¹⁶ Ervin is referring specifically to the doctrine of executive privilege, invoked with increasing frequency as a device for withholding information from Congress and the public so that "those who govern are not accountable for their actions." On this matter, Senator Ervin takes his stand within a distinguished tradition. Thomas Jefferson warned that if citizens "become inattentive to the public affairs," then the government "shall all become wolves"¹⁷ -- a perceptive remark, and an accurate prediction. The story revealed by the Pentagon Papers is just what we should expect

of a system of centralized power insulated from public scrutiny and democratic control, and unmindful -- perhaps even ignorant -- of the human consequences of its acts. The Pentagon Study reveals the workings of a conspiracy of men who have "become wolves," international predators, exactly as should be anticipated under the circumstances. For a generation, there has been a contrived inattention to public affairs in the domain of foreign policy. Government secrecy has been a contributing factor, far outweighed in importance, however, by the intense indoctrination that had rendered the public inert until very recently, until the Vietnamese resistance awakened some degree of skepticism and open-mindedness with regard to the behavior of the state executive and its official claims. With the partial collapse of the ideological consensus of the post-war years, it is much easier to undertake some serious inquiry into the U.S. role in world affairs. The release and publication of the Pentagon Papers are in part a result of this more healthy intellectual climate, and should contribute to it, one may hope.

Naturally, the government response is to try to shore up the dikes. The Nixon-Kissinger Administration has gone even beyond its predecessors in invoking the "inherent executive power," in particular, the proclaimed right to withhold information from Congress and the public. This is consistent with the Nixon ideology of radical authoritarianism (often mislabelled "conservatism") and Kissinger's belief in the need for tight central management in foreign policy.¹⁸

A related matter is the flagrant disregard for law on the part of this Administration, perhaps even beyond its predecessors. As a revealing, if minor illustration, consider the use of Thai mercenaries in Laos, recently the subject of some acid commentary in Congress. An executive session of the Senate was called to consider the CIA war in Laos, and in particular,

the fact "that the United States is currently paying for foreign troops, for mercenaries if you will, despite legislation which, by letter as well as intent, was designed to prohibit any such practice."¹⁹ Despite repeated efforts on the part of Senator Fulbright, information was withheld until reporters determined that thousands of Thai troops, recruited and funded by the CIA, were fighting in Laos under Thai officers in a new phase of the decade-long war conducted under CIA direction "without the authorization of the Congress; and largely without the knowledge-- therefore obviously without the consent -- of either the Congress or the American people."²⁰ With these ~~acts,~~ ^{acts,} the U.S. Administration moves another step towards realizing the proposal of George Ball in 1965 that "partition of Laos with Thai-U.S. forces occupying the western half" ~~by some cover arrangement~~ might be an appropriate method for "securing the Mekong Valley," "critical in any long-run solution" (IV, 618; Ball has been widely praised for his appreciation, in this memorandum, of the difficulties of fighting an unpopular war against a large part of the population of South Vietnam).

In Senate hearings, Alexis Johnson, speaking for the Administration, was asked whether he considered Thais in Laos to be local forces, as required by law. "I do consider them local forces," he replied. Asked further whether he believed that under the terms of the legislation, it would be permissible to "recruit Cambodians and Malaysians, Australians or anybody you felt, by calling them local forces," Mr. Johnson explained that he did indeed; ~~regard~~ ^{they would then become} "Lao forces" ~~as~~ ^{local forces,} "as required by ~~the legislation~~ the legislation restricting funds to local Lao forces."²¹

In the face of such blatant violation of law, Senator Symington raised the question: "If we pass a law and the law can be honored in the breach, what real reason is there to be a Senator of the United States."²² And Senator Fulbright noted that "I and some of my colleagues have almost been reduced to

the situation where it makes no difference what is put into law, the Administration will not abide by it," adding that perhaps someday "this country will return to its senses and we will then have an opportunity to resurrect the basic principles of law on which this country was founded."²³

The example is, to be sure, a minor one in the context of general executive lawlessness in Indochina, but it serves to indicate why the Administration must continue to "enslave the citizenry [and Congress as well] in bonds of ignorance." It is no surprise, then, that there was an effort at prior restraint, the first in American history, followed by an indictment alleging a conspiracy involving Daniel Ellsberg, Anthony Russo, and others, with further indictments pending. The point was captured succinctly in a Mauldin cartoon showing a worried Nixon whispering to LBJ: "If I let them print the truth about you, I'd be their next victim." What the Administration fears is a breakdown in the system of secrecy that has so facilitated the planning and execution of policies that cannot be defended before the public.

In an important study of the First Amendment, Thomas Emerson points out that "limitations of expression are by nature an attempt to prevent the possibility of certain events occurring rather than a punishment of the undesired conduct after it has taken place."²⁴ In the present instance, this observation applies ^{with} (a slight ^{modification.} ~~modification.~~) The punishment is intended to prevent efforts to inform the public about events still to occur. Reviewing earlier efforts to restrict First Amendment rights, Emerson concludes, I think correctly, that in each case ^{alleged} the (need for restriction upon freedom of expression was seriously exaggerated, administration of the limitations created an "obnoxious" enforcement apparatus, and, most significantly, "in practice the restrictions were employed to achieve objectives

quite different from the theoretical purposes of the laws," with social losses that proved significant. The response to the publication of the Pentagon Papers is a case in point.

The central issue in this case has not reached the courts, and probably will not -- a good thing, perhaps, considering the character of the Nixon Court. The central issue is that legalisms aside, there is an element of absurdity in any investigation or prosecution of those who released the Pentagon Papers to the American public. ~~Any indictment of those involved in making this information available represents nothing more than an effort on the part of the Government to punish the exposure of its crimes.~~ We may ask whether it is the law itself that is absurd, in that it permits such proceedings, or whether the law is again being contravened. These are the proper questions to raise in connection with the indictments growing out of the Pentagon Papers.

It can be plausibly argued that the First Amendment provides a proper framework for exposing the absurdity of the proceedings. The government alleges that release of this material to the American public violates various statutes, for example, the sections of the Espionage Act which prohibit the transmission of documents, etc., "relating to the national defense," or of "information relating to the national defense which information the possessor has reason to believe could be used to the injury of the United States or to the advantage of any foreign nation."²⁵ Congress has, however, passed no law prohibiting the release of documents or information relating, not to the national defense but to a history of aggression (the executive, of course, will ~~characterize aggression as "national defense"~~); or prohibiting ~~the~~ the release of information which the possessor has reason to believe will be used to the advantage of the United States -- that is, the people of the United States and the Congress. If it was not the intent of the Espionage Act to protect the executive from embarrassing disclosures, or to permit it

to conceal its actions from the public and from Congress, there is no reason to suppose that release of the Pentagon Papers, in an effort to inform the American people about the acts -- perhaps criminal acts -- of successive Administrations, is in violation of the Espionage Act.

It might be argued further that under ~~the~~ First Amendment, no congressional statute can inhibit transmission of information to the press. The Courts, however, have never ~~maintained~~ ^{adopted} a strict interpretation of the First Amendment. They have held, rather, that the press cannot, for example, publish "the sailing dates of transports or the number and location of troops," ²⁶ appealing to the First Amendment for protection against prosecution. Several cases that might fall under this proscription are mentioned in the Pentagon Papers. ~~The White House~~

~~_____~~ called off a planned attack on the Tchepone barracks ^{in Southern Laos in December 1964} (it was "deleted as a secondary mission") "because a Hanson Baldwin article had named it as a likely target" (III, 255). Later, strikes against North Vietnamese petroleum facilities at Haiphong were temporarily cancelled when the ~~_____~~ ^{Dow Jones news wire} reported the plans, "an extremely serious leak, because of the high risk of ^{U.S.} losses if NVN defenses were fully prepared" ^(IX, 106). In another incident, the President seems to have announced the Tonkin Gulf "retaliatory strike" before U.S. planes were intercepted by North Vietnamese radar. The reason, according to ²⁷ Anthony Austin's important study, is that although "If the President spoke too soon he would be tipping off Hanoi," nevertheless "if he delayed much longer he would lose his audience on the whole Eastern seaboard" (the hour being past 11 PM, Washington time).

In recent years, the Courts have held that ~~the~~ First Amendment rights must be balanced against other interests. Emerson suggests that this "balancing" test has been construed so broadly that the First Amendment may be reduced "to a limp and lifeless formality," "threatened with disintegration." ²⁸ However one regards the balancing doctrine, it applies in the present case only if the Government represents some legitimate public interest in its |-----|

efforts to prosecute those who released the Pentagon Study to the American public. If so, then one might ask whether this interest, whatever it may be, outweighs the First Amendment. But the question does not even arise if the Government represents no legitimate public interest. In this instance, the public interest lies squarely in the strict and literal interpretation of the First Amendment, which affords the citizen some protection against the state, in that inquiry may reveal secret plans that might be criminal, or might simply be condemned by an informed public. Such considerations are particularly important in a political system with no opposition party in the domain of foreign affairs and no system of parliamentary questioning. Deprived of the information revealed by a press that is substantially free, the citizen has no defense against the conniving of the State Executive. It is therefore essential for the press to play an adversary role, as the First Amendment permits, ~~the press is inhibited by ideological constraints, intimidation, or the concentration of wealth and power, fundamental rights are infringed.~~ To the extent that the press is inhibited by ideological constraints, intimidation, or ^{simply} the concentration of wealth and power, fundamental rights are infringed. The Government can make no legitimate claim to abridge these rights in the interest of "enslaving the citizenry in bonds of ignorance." The First Amendment alone suffices to block the government's current efforts to intimidate the press and restrain its further investigations by prosecuting and otherwise harassing individuals who expose its ^{ugly secrets,} ~~its~~.

In the case of the Pentagon Papers, the issue is particularly clear because the government is seeking to punish the release of historical information. But the same would be true in the more interesting case of plans for the future. For example, on February 26, 1966 the President stated: "We do not have on my desk at the moment any unfilled requests from General Westmoreland."²⁹ In fact, there was at this time a request to

double the troop commitment, and the President had on his desk a Memorandum from the Secretary of Defense stating that with deployments of the kind recommended (to about 400,000 by the end of 1966 and perhaps more than 600,000 in the following year), U.S. killed-in-action could be expected to reach 1000 per month (IV, 309, 623-4). The President and his advisors did not consider it appropriate that the American people should be aware of what was in store for them. To cite another case, when Secretary Rusk spoke on television on January 3, 1965, "ruling out...a major expansion of the war" (III, 138, 263), ^{the basis for the} escalation that soon followed had already been solidly laid, as he knew. He also knew the possible consequences, ^(whatever his personal estimate of the probabilities may have been.) An NSC working group had predicted that the commitment "to maintain a non-Communist South Vietnam" would "involve high risks of a major conflict in Asia," which would "almost inevitably involve a Korean-scale ground action and possibly even the use of nuclear weapons at some point."³⁰ Earlier, Secretary Rusk himself had emphasized to General Khanh that the "U.S. would never again get involved in a land war in Asia limited to conventional forces," and that "if escalation brought about major Chinese attack, it would also involve use of nuclear arms" (II, 322; May, 1964).

To those in power, it seems obvious that the population must be cajoled and manipulated, frightened and kept in ignorance, so that ruling elites can operate without hindrance in "the national interest", as they choose to define it. The citizen should be informed of only "the things he needs to know to be a good citizen and discharge his functions," as Maxwell Taylor explained in commenting on the people's "right to know", after the release of the Pentagon Papers.³¹ If policies are to be modified, then "a conditioning of the U.S. public" is necessary, and where this cannot be done with sufficient rapidity, the executive may find itself trapped by its own earlier misrepre-

32

sentations.

But officials of the government have no legal authority to act in accordance with their contempt for the public and to lie with impunity. And under a reasonable interpretation of the First Amendment, they have no authority to prosecute the exposure of their deceit and their acts.

The Pentagon Papers provide documentary evidence of a conspiracy to use force in international affairs in violation of law. One may debate the sufficiency of the evidence, but hardly its existence. The Justice Department, which initiates criminal investigation and prosecution, is at the service of the conspirators. Naturally, instead of investigating a possible conspiracy to involve the United States in an expanding war of aggression in Indochina, with continual and recognized risks of nuclear war, it will rather try to protect the inheritors of these policies from scrutiny and will prosecute these who bring the facts to the public, which must know these facts if it is to act to restrain the executive. The Justice Department, in short, will seek to demonstrate that Proudhon was quite right when he wrote that laws are "spider-webs for the powerful and the rich, chains that no steel can break for the small and weak, fishing nets in the hands of the government."

The Bill of Rights represents an effort of great historical significance to protect the citizen from state power. The true content of these formal rights is determined by the willingness of the public to defend them,

One essential element in the protection of the citizen is his access to information about the acts and plans of the state executive. It will require energy and determination to overcome the natural tendency of the state executive to conceal its doings. This, it seems to me, is the fundamental issue raised by the release of the Pentagon Papers and subsequent events relating to that release.

III

The contents of the Pentagon Papers, not merely the circumstances of their release, bear directly on problems of law and conscience and legitimate social action. But we must be clear about the issue that is at stake when we inquire into the legality of the American intervention in Indochina. It is not in dispute, among rational people with some concern for the facts, that the U.S. command is responsible for major crimes in Indochina, in the layman's sense of the term "crime." A Saigon newspaper writes that in any place "in which our magnificent allies the Americans are present, at that place Vietnamese lives weigh no more than those of earthworms or crickets."³⁶ The author is speaking of what a knowledgeable Australian analyst calls a "semi-genocidal counter-insurgent strategy," the main element, he notes, in the American "success" in Vietnam.³⁷ Under Nixon alone, bombing tonnage exceeds that of U.S. forces in World War II by 50%. There is little excuse for a continued pretense that we do not know what this means. Even in the remote area of Northern Laos, where it is conceded that the attacks do not "have to do with the operations in South Vietnam and Cambodia,"³⁸ the Nixon Administration is responsible for the virtual destruction of a civilian society, and quite consciously so. When a society of scattered villages is ~~destroyed~~
~~and the people are forced to live in a state of constant fear~~
~~and the land is rendered barren~~ pounded by everything from B-52s to delayed action cluster bombs, though "enemy" troops are rarely present, when nothing is left of the formerly fertile land but craters and fields strewn with yet unexploded ordnance, on such a scale that resettlement may be impossible for many years after peace returns,³⁹ then rational people with a concern for fact do not debate the possibility that crimes, in the layman's sense, have been committed, nor are they in doubt as to who is respon-

sible for these crimes.

We turn rather to questions that can be debated, in particular, the question whether the acts that are documented beyond ^{reasonable} dispute are crimes in the lawyer's sense. But we must recognize that when we raise this question, it is not the war that is on trial, but the law. We are asking -- if we are serious -- whether the law is a sufficiently precise and delicate instrument so that it can label a monstrous crime as a violation of law.

The Pentagon Study is not concerned with the character of U.S. military and police activities in Indochina, and therefore provides little information about war crimes in the narrow sense: massacres, forced evacuation, destruction of the land, and so on. But it does provide important documentary evidence with respect to a second question that can be rationally debated: "crimes against peace" ~~is the U.S. executive guilty of~~ in Indochina? Even apart from the Pentagon Papers, there is considerable evidence that the U.S. Executive, at least since 1961 and particularly since 1965, has been guilty of the essential crime of Nuremberg.⁴⁰ The Pentagon Papers give additional support to this conclusion. They reveal that each step of escalation was taken, not to counter an armed attack from the North, but to sustain a regime in the South that was incapable of withstanding a rebellion that was overwhelmingly indigenous; that U.S. military intervention was not reported to the ^{UN} Security Council (or to the American people, in many instances); that the policy was to avoid "premature negotiations" which would enable the "enemy," holding all the cards, to achieve his objectives through political means; that the intervention was guided by the long-term goal of retaining as much of Indochina as possible within the "Free World," in particular, within the U.S.-Japanese Pacific system, for fear of erosion of that system; that the U.S. undertook a counter-insurgent strategy that might well be described as "semi-genocidal" out of military necessity, in Has it been engaged in "Planning, preparation, initiation or waging of a war of aggression or a war in violation of international treaties, agreements or assurances," or in a conspiracy to this end, in the wording of the Nuremberg Tribunal?

the sense that there appeared to be no other way to crush the mass-based movement that resisted American domination.

I will return to specific evidence on these matters. Here, I merely want to emphasize the essential point. In considering the legality of U.S. intervention in Indochina, a person who is serious about the matter is not examining the propriety of the act, but rather the adequacy of the law. Suppose we were to determine that international law does not condemn the U.S. intervention as criminal in the technical sense, a crime against peace. Then a rational person will regard the law, so understood, with all of the respect accorded to the doctrine of divine right of kings.⁴¹ In fact, it seems to me that the law is not so deficient as to be unable to rule this intervention illegal. But it is, again, important to be clear about what is at stake when the question is raised.

The fundamental treaty obligation of the United States is to the UN Charter, to which other treaties, such as SEATO, are explicitly subordinate. The UN Charter, which ^{as a valid treaty,} is the supreme law of the land, specifies a series of "peaceful means" (negotiations, etc.) that must be employed in the event of a dispute that might endanger peace (Article 33). It is the sole responsibility of the Security Council to "determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression" and to determine what measures shall be taken (Article 39). Member states are required to "refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations" (Article 2). There is only one exception: "Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to maintain international peace and security"

(Article 51). Article 51 is consistent with the remainder of the Charter on the assumption that "armed attack" is construed narrowly, as an attack that is "instant, overwhelming, and leaving no choice of means, and no moment for deliberation," in a classic formulation.⁴²

The war planners were aware that appeal to Article 51 would require "a major public relations effort" (III, 229, discussing the ~~U.S.~~ ^{"fast/full"} squeeze," in November 1964). And the U.S. Executive has never been in doubt regarding the distinction between "armed attack," which permits collective self-defense until the Security Council has an opportunity to act, and other forms of threat to peace, which do not. The distinction is written into the SEATO treaty, allegedly the basis for U.S. intervention, which permits only consultation in the event of threats "other than by armed attack." A policy statement of the National Security Council (August, 1954) states that: "If requested by a legitimate local government which requires assistance to defeat local Communist subversion or rebellion not constituting armed attack, the ~~U.S.~~ ^{U.S.} should view such a situation so gravely that, in addition to giving all possible covert and overt support within ~~the~~ Executive Branch authority, the President should at once consider requesting Congressional authority to take appropriate action, which might if necessary and feasible include the use of U.S. military forces either locally or against the external source of such subversion or rebellion (including Communist China if determined to be the source)."⁴³ The statement is interesting not only for its explicit recognition of the distinction between armed attack and other threats to peace, but also for the equally explicit recognition that the U.S. does not consider itself bound by its legal obligations under the UN Charter, as a careful comparison of the quoted statement with the law reveals. Indeed, the same statement urges that the U.S. "maintain...support

for Chinese nationalist harrassing actions" against China and proposes "covert operations on a large and effective scale" in support of U.S. policies throughout Indochina, in particular, to "make more difficult the control by the Viet Minh of North Vietnam" ^(pp. 733, 737.) See the reports of General Lansdale on such activities ^(in Indochina) (I, 573f.; II, 643f.).

The law seems reasonably clear and straightforward, in this case. The open questions ^{have} to do with historical interpretation. The questions concern the "state of South Vietnam," a state established and maintained in existence by U.S. force; a state which claims, in its 1967 Constitution, Article 1, that "Viet-Nam is a territorially indivisible, unified and independent republic," thus extending from the borders of China to the Camau peninsula, (this being the only provision of the Constitution not subject to amendment or deletion; ⁹ Article 107), ^{43a} as the Geneva Agreements also stipulate. The question is: was this state subjected to a sudden and overwhelming armed attack, leaving no opportunity for the Security Council to determine the existence of a threat to peace, so that the U.S. was permitted to intervene in collective self-defense? ^P We hardly need the Pentagon Study to refute this claim. This study merely provides further and still more conclusive evidence that the alleged "aggression from the North," far from constituting an armed attack, consisted at most of "support and direction" for the domestic insurgency at a time when ^{the United States was} ~~the United States was~~ ^{operations} directly engaged in combat ⁱⁿ South Vietnam (1961 through mid-1965), ⁴⁴ and when the U.S. was providing "our leadership, and our officer direction, and equipment as we can furnish them." ⁴⁵ It further adds supporting ^{evidence} to the conclusion that direct North Vietnamese military involvement followed upon the regular bombardment of all Vietnam and the invasion of South Vietnam by an American Expeditionary Force ⁴⁶ in early 1965. It was always understood that heightened U.S. intervention

might lead to "DRV ground action in South Vietnam or Laos" in "retaliation" (III, 616; William Bundy, November 1964). In May 1965 Ambassador Taylor submitted a U.S. Mission "Assessment of DRV/VC Probable Courses of Action During the Next Three Months" which argued that Hanoi might expand its military action in the South, "including covert introduction of additional PAVN units on order of several regiments," a course that offers "the prospect of achieving major military gains capable of offsetting US/GVN application of air power" (III, 364; on U.S. estimates of PAVN strength in the South at the time, see pp. XXf., below). An intelligence estimate of July 23, 1965 warned that it was "almost certain" that "additional PAVN forces [would be] employed in South Vietnam on a scale sufficient to counter increased US troop strength" (IV, 25). In July 1967, McNamara was informed by Westmoreland in Saigon that "the enemy" was forced "to supply manpower from North Vietnam" to compensate for the denial of recruits "from the populated areas along the coast" in the South, as a result of U.S. military actions (IV, 518; cf. also III, 397, 621; IV, 484f.). In short, U.S. authorities were well aware that their escalation would probably draw the North Vietnamese army into combat in the South. When the expected happened, every hypocrite in Washington would howl in protest, to the accompaniment of much of the press (and with nuances, parts of the "intellectual community" as well), over the infamy of the North Vietnamese aggressors, launching an unprovoked attack against the peace-loving South Vietnamese people and their ~~staunch~~ staunch American allies. With minor variants, the same record has been (in response to events) replayed elsewhere in Indochina.

It is interesting that according to the study of attitudes of captives and defectors cited above, ~~those~~ those who expected a Vietcong victory (a minority, according to the report) based their belief in part on their expectation of intervention by North Vietnam (recall that the study ran to December 1965; see note 5a).

The U.S. executive is granted no authority, under law, to determine that the North

~~might lead to DRV ground action in South Vietnam, Laos in retaliation~~
~~(11, 610, William Bundy, November 1964, also IV, 251, 621 (note 4)). The U.S.~~

~~Executive is granted no competence, under law, to determine that the North~~
 Vietnamese involvement it believed to exist during these years constituted aggression, or to respond to the Southern insurgency by deployment of U.S. military force from the early 1960s. Similarly, it had no authority to implant a terroristic dictatorship in South Vietnam (or even a benevolent democracy), or to carry out covert activities or overt military actions elsewhere in Indochina.

The Pentagon Study reveals that U.S. policy-makers believed the NLF to be a creature of Hanoi. Under law, they were entitled to express this belief, say in 1961 -- though not to commit U.S. forces to combat (see note 4) ~~and to~~ request the Security Council of the United Nations to determine the existence of a threat to peace. That they did not do so is significant, and self-explanatory. But it is worth mentioning that there is a logical gap between the demonstration, surely adequate, that U.S. policy-makers believed the Southern insurgency to be supported and directed by Hanoi, and a demonstration that this was indeed so. The Pentagon Papers provide no direct evidence on the latter point, though they refer to intelligence estimates allegedly demonstrating such control (e.g., IV, 353). The matter has no bearing on the issue of U.S. aggression, but might be considered nonetheless. It is relevant, for example, that the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific (CINCPAC) also believed that Hanoi furnished "support and direction" to the "insurgency in Thailand," exactly as alleged in the case of South Vietnam (IV, 124). When pressed, however, U.S. officials are unable to present evidence that the Thai insurgency is directed, or even receives more than minimal support, from China or North Vietnam, even long after the use of Thai bases for the U.S. air war throughout

Indochina.⁴⁷ There have been efforts to demonstrate that the Pathet Lao is hardly more than an agency of the DRV, and [REDACTED] has little role in the fighting in Laos, but they are not very impressive.⁴⁸ Furthermore we know, even apart from the Pentagon Study, that U.S. policy-makers have been obsessed with fantasies about the role of "international communism" in Vietnam. The U.S. did attempt to prove North Vietnamese aggression in a White Paper of February 1965. But as Chester Cooper observes, this "proved to be a dismal disappointment" because "the actual findings seemed pretty frail."⁴⁹ ~~His~~ *observation* takes on added interest when we learn that Cooper was in charge of preparing the evidence on infiltration for publication (III, 255, 681).

The essence of the U.S. position is revealed by public statements explaining the concept of "aggression." Consider, for example, the fairly typical remarks by Adlai Stevenson to the Security Council, 21 May 1964 (III, 715-6). He observed that "the point is the same in Vietnam today as it was in Greece in 1947." In both cases, the U.S. was defending a free people from "internal aggression."

I would remind the members that in 1947, after the aggressors had gained control of most of the country, many people felt that the cause of the Government of Greece was hopelessly lost. But as long as the people of Greece were prepared to fight for the life of their own country, the United States was not prepared to stand by while Greece was overrun."

Similarly, "The United States cannot stand by while Southeast Asia is overrun by armed aggressors."

Stevenson's historical analogy is more or less to the point. In Vietnam, as in Greece, the United States was seeking to block "internal aggression," that is, "aggression" by a mass-based indigenous movement against a government protected by foreign power, where the "internal aggression" has the kind of outside support that few wars of liberation have lacked (the American revolution, to cite one example).

In both cases, in utter defiance of ~~the United States~~ ^{available evidence,} the United States has sought to mask the absurdity of its claims by pretending that the "internal aggressors" were merely agents of a global conspiracy directed by Moscow or "Peiping."⁵⁰ Thus in June, 1949, the State Department solemnly informed the French government of the "inevitable intention" of the Viet Minh "to subvert the nationalist cause in the end to the requirements of international Communism." The benighted Vietnamese, unable to comprehend this fact, are impressed by "its effective leadership of the nationalist movement." But the U.S. understands full well, and therefore takes the "paramount question in Indochina" to be "whether the country is to be saved from Communist control," all other issues being "irrelevant," given the need "to preserve Indochina from a foreign tyranny" (~~DoD~~, ~~book 8, 208-9~~). Dean Rusk went on to inform the press that the French and the "independent" Associated States are firmly holding the line in "defense of Indochina against communist colonialism," spearheaded by the Viet Minh (ibid., 397).

The National Security Council (February, 1950) held that the French ^{along with native troops,} Army, "is now in armed conflict with the forces of communist aggression," and is "attempting to restore law and order" (I, 361). The President's Special

Committee on Southeast Asia, in ~~early~~ 1954, explained further that the French had demonstrated, by their grant of independence to the Associated States, that "the Viet Minh are not fighting for freedom." The French are fighting "to defend the cause of liberty and freedom from Communism in Indochina." "The cause of Viet Minh," in contrast, is "the cause of colonialization and subservience to Kremlin rule as was the cause in China, in North Korea ⁵¹ and in the European satellites" (~~DoD~~, ~~book 9, 342~~). The Viet Minh are the colonialists; the French defend Vietnamese independence.

In his first State of the Union message, President Kennedy warned that "In Asia, the relentless pressures of the Chinese Communists menace the

security of the entire area -- from the borders of India and South Viet Nam to the jungles of Laos, struggling to protect its newly-won independence."⁵² A draft report of the Gilpatric Task Force (May, 1961), discussing the deployment of "U.S. battle groups," stated that their purpose would be to deter "further Communist aggression from North Vietnam, China, or the Soviet Union, while rallying the morale of the Vietnamese " (emphasis mine, II, 48). On the eve of the escalation of February, 1965, John McNaughton, with the agreement of McNamara, described the "U.S. objective in South Vietnam" as "to contain China" (III, 686, 267), and two months later stated a major objective as: "To keep SVN (and then adjacent) territory from Chinese hands."⁵³ A more profound misunderstanding of the content of Vietnamese nationalism, and its communist leadership, could hardly be imagined. And George Carver, speaking for the CIA in April, 1966, proclaimed the objective of "Demonstrating the sterile futility of the militant and aggressive expansionist policy advocated by the present rulers of ^{Communist} China" (IV, 82). Essentially the same view was developed further by McGeorge Bundy, in mid-1967, when he stated that whatever Eastern intellectuals may think, most Americans and "nearly all Asians" know that the domino theory is correct; thus U.S. intervention "has already saved the hope of freedom for hundreds of millions,"^e no less (IV, 159). Robert McNamara added that the objective of "draw[ing] the line against Chinese expansionism in Asia" had already been attained (IV, 174).⁵⁴ And so on.

The notions of the Kennedy intellectuals and the CIA are hardly different from some of the weird views of American military experts. For example, General Van Fleet, reporting on his mission to the Far East in October, 1954, charged that "Since the end of World War II, the Chinese Communist regime has waged a relentless war against the free world, specifically the United States." "Peace

For the present, two points deserve emphasis. The first is that inability to establish the link required by government propaganda led to some curious constructions by the more subtle geopoliticians. At one stage of the 25 year war it was necessary to defeat the Vietnamese communists to prevent Kremlin rule over Indochina. At another, to save the Vietnamese people from the alien influence of China. At still another, to prevent the militant Chinese ideology from gaining ascendance over the more moderate Kremlin version within the Communist world. And tomorrow, we shall, very likely, hear that the U.S. must continue to pound Indochina to dust to further the common U.S.-Chinese interest in preventing Soviet hegemony over South and Southeast Asia. It is noteworthy that as the premises replace one another in rapid succession, nevertheless the conclusion deduced from them ~~main~~ remains constant: Kill Cong. The second point is that the actual Russian and Chinese involvement in Indochina, in direct assistance to the DRV, was a response to American escalation ^(in 1964 and after), just as the direct involvement of DRV ground forces in South Vietnam was a response to the U.S. escalation of the ground and air war in the South and the bombing of the North (see pp. XX, ~~XXV~~ ^{XXV}). But once the "intervention" had taken place, government propagandists were quick to exploit it as a justification for still further U.S. escalation to save the people of South Vietnam from ~~foreign~~ aggression.

Returning to the nature of the "aggression" in South Vietnam, internal

~~with freedom cannot be restored to Asia as long as the Chinese Communist~~
~~regime continues to exist" (Government Edition, Book 10, 794). It would be~~
~~interesting to explore further General Van Fleet's views about "restoring~~
~~freedom to Asia."~~

~~Internal~~ documents quite generally refer to the "VC aggression in the South" (e.g., IV, 58, October, 1965). Similarly, ~~General Van Fleet~~ ^{a Pentagon memorandum} described "the obvious and not wholly anticipated strength of the Viet Cong infrastructure" after the Tet offensive of 1968, adding that this "shows that there can be no prospect of a quick military solution to the aggression in South Vietnam" -- the aggression, that is, organized by the VC infrastructure (IV, 581). On the character of "aggression," there are also interesting comments by the Joint Chiefs. In February, 1955, they foresaw "three basic forms in which aggression in Southeast Asia can occur: a) Overt armed attack from outside of the area, b) Overt armed attack from within the area of each of the sovereign states, c) Aggression other than armed, i.e., political warfare, or subversion" (~~Doc~~, ~~book 10, 885~~). The concept of "overt armed attack from within" a sovereign state is Stevenson's "internal aggression." In defining "political warfare" as a form of aggression, the Joint Chiefs reveal that they comprehend with precision and insight the fundamental position of the U.S. executive.

Similarly, the President justified the initiation of low-level armed reconnaissance (i.e., bombing and strafing) in Laos in May, 1964 as a reaction to "new acts of communist aggression in Laos" (III, 720). The aggressors, in this case, were left-leaning neutralists and Pathet Lao who restored the status quo as of April, 1963, ~~possibly~~ ^{possibly} reacting ~~to a right-wing coup attempt in Vientiane and an effort to integrate left-neutralist forces into the rightist army.~~ ⁵⁵ In these and many other cases, the U.S. con-

cept of "aggression" gives the game away. Indigenous forces are carrying out "internal aggression" against regimes chosen to rule by the Western powers, and protected from their own populations by ~~some~~ outside force (acting in "collective self-defense" against this "aggression").

The Pentagon ~~■~~ historian traces the ~~■~~ "U.S. awareness of the requirement to promote internal stability" to the late 1950s, noting in particular the contribution of the Draper Committee (The President's Committee to Study the U.S. Military Assistance Program) in 1958-9. The Draper Committee distinguished clearly between two tasks of the military forces "assisted" by the U.S.: ~~■~~ "countering external aggression" and countering ~~■~~ "internal aggression" (II, 435). Perhaps this is the origin of the interesting notion "internal aggression," later adopted by Stevenson and others. The Draper Committee's papers also "sought to popularize military civic action programs and to link them to politically acceptable) ~~precedents -- such as the U.S. Army's role in the development of the American West.~~" The reference is suggestive. The U.S. Army was protecting the developers of the American West from the internal aggression of the Indians who were being swept off their lands. Taking this as a "precedent," who plays the role of the American Indians in the "military civic action programs" advised and assisted by the U.S. military in some foreign land? And to whom is the precedent, or its contemporary analogue, "politically acceptable"? Pursuing these questions, we achieve some interesting insights into the ~~■~~ counter-insurgency doctrines that developed out of the deliberations of the Draper Committee and that so entranced the Kennedy intellectuals.

~~cent of "aggression" gives the game away. Indigenous forces are carrying out "internal aggression" against regimes chosen to rule by the Western powers, and protected from their own populations by outside force (acting on collective self-defense against this "aggression").~~

Occasionally, explicit notice is taken of the fact that "In South Vietnam, the Communists are clearly embarked on a 'national liberation war' of insurgency and subversion from within rather [than] on overt aggression."⁵⁶ The distinction is fundamental. It undermines any appeal to the UN Charter or to the SEATO treaty, as has frequently been noted. The facts, however, did not prevent President Kennedy from asserting that "the systematic aggression now bleeding that country is not a 'war of liberation' -- for Viet Nam is already free,"^(II, 806; Jan. 1962) as they have never prevented his advisors from saying that the U.S. was throughout engaged in defending a free people from aggression, or that in 1962 "aggression[was] checked in Vietnam."⁵⁷ Misrepresentation becomes absurdity, when we realize that in that same year, 1962, U.S. ~~forces~~ ^{forces} were directly engaged in combat operations against the insurgents in South Vietnam.⁵⁸ ~~Throughout~~ Throughout, the United States, exactly like France, is fighting to preserve the freedom of the Vietnamese from the colonialist Viet Minh and their successors in aggression. On this assumption it is quite proper for Ambassador "axwell Taylor to sputter with indignation over the "outrageous acts of the Vietcong in South Vietnam, such as the attack on Bien Hoa," the American air base, ^{damaging (27 of 30)} ~~destroying~~ ^(B-57's) ~~several~~ ^{U.S. (1962)} and killing ~~several~~ ^(Americans). To "repay" such outrageous acts, "we could engage in reprisal bombings" against North Vietnam, which we have determined to be responsible ^(III, 276; 1964) (III, 669; II, 341; October - November, 1964).

While defending South Vietnam against "internal aggression," the U.S. was also forced to contend with criminal elements, such as the Buddhists of Hue and Danang, who were responsible for "criminal violence operating under political, economic and social guise" (Ambassador Lodge, May 1966, IV, 99). Their actions demonstrated to him that the Vietnamese are obviously not ready for self-government, and raised the possibility that "we may have to decide how much it is worth to us to deny Viet-Nam to Hanoi and Peking -- regardless of what the Vietnamese may think," (IV, 100).

Returning to the matter of U. S. aggression, it is possible to devise a defense that is less disreputable intellectually than the appeal to SEATO or to Article 51 of the Charter, and probably this defense will be heard more frequently now that the Pentagon Papers have further undermined the argument based on the inherent right of collective self-defense against armed attack.⁵⁹ It might be argued that nothing in the UN Charter prevents a government from calling on its allies to suppress an indigenous rebellion. Under this interpretation of the Charter, it is legitimate to use force to destroy an indigenous movement within the territory of another state on request of the incumbent government. It is further necessary to argue that such use of force is consistent with the purposes of the United Nations (see Article 2(4)), which include the commitment to peaceful means for settlement of disputes, respect for self-determination of peoples, and so on. The defense must reject the position taken by the General Assembly that "no State had the right to intervene, directly or indirectly, for any reason whatever, in the internal or external affairs of any other State," or to "interfere in civil strife in another State."⁶⁰ But at least it does not fly in the face of historical facts, and it can appeal to some ambiguity in the Charter as well as to a tradition granting rights to incumbent governments.

The primary virtue of this defense, however, is that it avoids hypocrisy. The interpretation of law that underlies it is explicitly counter-revolutionary, and expresses the fact that regardless of the law, great powers will do as they wish to achieve the objectives of their ruling elites ("the national interest"), restrained only by cost ~~of~~ competing force. The Bangkok Conference of Asian Jurists (1965) concluded that "in the former colonial territories, the Rule of Law is viewed more as a malevolent instrument of tyrannical rule than as a force of emancipation or of protection of human rights."⁶¹ As a general conclusion, this is accurate enough.

The "right to aid incumbent governments," whether claimed by the U. S. in South Vietnam or the U.S.S.R. in Hungary, is merely a flimsy disguise for imperial ambition. The same is true of the concept of "limited sovereignty" developed by the U.S. in the Caribbean, and later, in almost the same terms, by the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe. In both cases, the essence of the doctrine is that "a regional organization may designate a particular socio-political ideology as alien to the region," and its advocacy by indigenous groups, a form of aggression.⁶² In accordance with this doctrine, Guatemalans, Vietnamese, Hungarians and Czechs become aggressors in their own country, if they are inspired by an ideology held to be alien and intolerable by the great power dominating this sphere of influence.

It is immaterial that the incumbent government may lack legitimacy and "control" little of the population. In Vietnam, ~~this was a constant problem, [redacted]~~ another of those ethically neutral dilemmas of counterinsurgency. In the early years, ~~[redacted]~~ "the Viet Minh was the main repository of Vietnamese nationalism and anti-French colonialism" (I, 42), ~~[redacted]~~ and this fact was understood; see State Department analysis of Sept. 1948, (DD, book 8, 1448; ~~[redacted]~~ p. XX, above). Acheson noted in March 1950 that the French appear to "understand that success of [military] operation . . . depends, in

the end on overcoming opposition of indigenous population" (~~DOO~~ book 8, 301). Recall that these are the same French who are defending Indochina from "foreign tyranny" -- or, as Acheson put it here, who "are determined to protect IC from further COMMIE encroachments by [political], [economic] as well as [military] measures."

~~Diem's policy of repression, the Viet Cong, and the~~
~~"to person persuasion to bring in new members for the movement, relying~~
~~on the rural population and the Viet Cong, and the~~
~~as "the GVN created by its rural policy a climate of rural indignation, which~~
~~energized the peasants politically, turned them against the government, and~~
~~the Viet Cong, and permitted communists to conduct severe GVN repression and~~

P ~~By March 1961, intelligence estimated that~~
"VC controlled most of countryside" (II, 417), despite their limited military force.⁶³ As in later years, it was recognized that "vast majority of Viet Cong troops are of local origin" and there was "little evidence of major supplies from outside sources" (II, 72). As to infiltrators, intelligence warned of "experienced guerrilla forces from North Vietnam in guerrilla operations in territory long familiar to them" -- i.e., South Vietnamese returning to their homes (II, 77; Oct. 1961).

Towards the end of the Diem regime, the analyst concludes that "Only the Viet Cong had any real support and influence on a broad base in the countryside" and that the Army was "the only real alternative source of political power" (II, 204-5). The "clear and growing lack of legitimacy of GVN" (II, 278, Jan. 1964) is a constant refrain, reiterated as the situation was seen progressively to "deteriorate" through 1964-5. Offensive action^{was} against the North ~~was~~ undertaken in part in the hope that ^{it} ~~it~~ "might provide at least a partial antidote against the willingness of country boys to join the VC" (III, 95; analyst, referring to the situation as of March 1965). John McNaughton explained:

"Action against North Vietnam is to some extent a substitute for strengthening

the government in South Vietnam. That is, a less active VC (on orders from DRV) can be matched by a less efficient GVN.⁶ (III, 599; Nov. ~~1964~~ 1964).
 (under the favored option)
 Therefore the terms for settlement should be that "We will stop squeeze on DRV (no promise to withdraw from SVN)" if the DRV not only stops support and direction for the insurgency, but also "must order the VC and PL to stop their insurgencies" (III, 603). As Ambassador Taylor perceived the situation, even in the unlikely event that an effective government were established in the South, to attain U.S. goals it would not suffice to "drive the DRV out of its reinforcing role"; rather, we will not succeed unless we also "obtain its cooperation in bringing an end to the Viet Cong insurgency." We must "persuade or force the DRV to stop its aid to the Viet Cong and to use its directive powers to make the Viet Cong desist..." (III, 668-9).

As the U.S. prepared to extend the war to the North, intelligence concluded that "the basic elements of Communist strength in South Vietnam remain indigenous" (III, 653; Nov. 24, 1964), though the "high VC morale" is sustained in part by "receipt of outside guidance and support." The question why far greater outside guidance and support fails to sustain GVN morale remains unanswered, even unasked (nor is there an effort to explain why guerrilla operations in the North were such a miserable failure). The fact, nevertheless, was noted, and dominated discussion as the U.S. prepared to take over the war. The Principals (Rusk, McNamara, Wheeler, McCone, McGeorge Bundy, Ball) agreed "that the struggle would be a long one, even with the DRV out of it" (III, 237; November 24). The preceding August, Taylor had reported from Saigon that the Khanh government "has not succeeded in building any substantial body of active popular support in the countryside" and "has about a 50-50 chance of lasting out the year" (III, 82). By the end of the month Vietnamese paratroopers with bayonets had to be called out to restore order in Saigon (III, 86). On Sept. 6 Taylor explained that the politicians in Saigon and Hue feel that "the conflict with the VC belongs to the Americans." The U.S. must therefore "actively assume...increased responsibility for the outcome following a time-schedule consistent with our estimate of the limited viability of any South Vietnamese

government". The only alternative would be a political settlement, that is, "development of a popular front, knowing that this may in due course require the U.S. to leave Vietnam in failure," with consequences that would be "disastrous" throughout the Third World (II, 336). ^{"He went on to recommend that)} ~~recommender,~~ ^{begin} ~~escalating pressures on the DRV~~ ¹ ~~around December~~ ^{that is, a decent interval after the} peace candidate had been re-elected.

By the beginning of the ~~year~~ next year, the situation was desperate. William Buddy wrote on January 6 "that "the situation in Vietnam is now likely to come apart more rapidly than we had anticipated in November...the most likely form of coming apart would be a government of key groups starting to negotiate covertly with the Liberation Front or Hanoi," sooner or later asking us to leave (III, 685). The problem, ^{as} ~~was~~ the analyst explaining, ^{was} ~~that~~ "There was no sense of dedication to the GVN comparable to that instilled in the VC" (III, 94). Bundy felt that actions against North Vietnam "would have some faint hope of really improving the Vietnamese situation, and, above all, would put us in a much stronger position to hold the next line of defense, namely Thailand." Therefore we should not accept the present situation, "or any negotiation on the basis of it," but should move ~~the~~ "into stronger actions." In early 1965 "The GVN was seen to be well on its way to complete collapse. The most optimistic estimate was that the VC would take over within a year" (III, 390; analyst).

^{Given its} ~~indigenous political strength and the lack of~~ ^{was able to} legitimacy of the GVN, ~~that~~ the NLF ^{pursued} the strategy of gaining a political settlement, that is, one that would reflect indigenous political forces. Or, as Ambassador Taylor expressed the same thought on August 10, 1964: "The communist strategy as defined by North Vietnam and the pppet National Liberation Front is to seek a political settlement favorable to the communists...passing first through 'neutralism,' using the National Liberation Front machinery, and then the technique of a coalition government" (III, 531). Intelligence reports, shortly after, "estimated that it was the Communist intention to seek victory through a 'neutralist coalition' rather than by force of arms" (III, 207). McNaughton warned

in mid-October that the U.S. must "Watch for Saigon and Vientiane hanky panky with Reds" (III, 582) -- i.e., moves towards a political settlement. But a political settlement could no more be considered by the United States than by the French, ~~even the political settlement~~. The President had made this very clear to Ambassador Lodge in explaining that his mission was "knocking down the idea of neutralization wherever it rears its ugly head" (III, 511; March 20, 1964). Neutralism, as Ambassador Taylor noted, "appeared to mean throwing the internal political situation open and thus inviting Communist participation" (W. Bundy, memorandum of meeting of Nov. 27, 1964; III, 675). According to the analyst's report of this meeting, George Ball "observed that a neutralist state could not be maintained unless the VC were defeated and that the GVN must continue to be free to receive external aid until that occurred" (III, 242) -- an interesting concept of "neutralism," expressed by the Administration's official dove.

The analyst regards it as "ironic" that the NSC Working Group's "considerations of a negotiated settlement did not include the problems of a political settlement in the South" (III, 225). ~~The~~ The political weaknesses of the U.S.-imposed regimes as compared with their indigenous rivals ruled out a political settlement. The U.S. "had few bargaining points," the analyst notes, and "it was primarily to fill this lack that many group members and Administration officials favored initiation of direct military pressures against ~~the~~ North Vietnam."

From ~~some reliable~~ other sources, we know that the general opinion in Washington and in the U.S. Mission in Saigon was about the same. Chester Cooper, close to the center of planning for many years, speaks of "the hope [in 1965] that a South Vietnamese government could be organized that would eventually be able to compete politically with the National Liberation Front."⁶⁴ American spokesmen in Saigon outlined the problem of utilizing our vast military power, with its weak political base, to defeat an enemy with enormous political force but only modest military power.⁶⁵ In almost the same words, captured documents speak of the "absolute superiority over the enemy in the political field," in contrast to the military superiority of the U.S.-GVN.⁶⁶ Western scholars have generally come to the same conclusion. Few would disagree with John McAlister's explanation as to why the ~~pro~~-Western, urban-oriented (and to be fully honest, Western-imposed) governments have had "no choice but to rely on military force" -- foreign military force at that: "Without a means of transforming control over territory into popular political loyalties, these governments have simply not been able to compete on the same plane with their Communist adversaries," who were "successful in mobilizing political power" primarily because of "the relevancy of their values to the lives villagers must lead."⁶⁷ Hence the inescapable necessity for the U.S. to demolish the rural society.

In the same vein, the strongly anti-Communist former legal and political adviser to the Polish Delegation of the ICC, Mieczyslaw Maneli, reports a discussion in 1964 with an anti-Communist Vietnamese intellectual who chose to support the NLF, regarding its victory as "inevitable," since the Communists "were the only ones to fight for national liberation and meaningful social reforms" and the only possible alternative is "the corrupt regime kept in power by the Americans."⁶⁸ ~~Some of the more reliable sources of this information~~

Under a reasonable interpretation of the U.N. Charter, intervention under these conditions is not permissible, but this fact in no way inhibits great power practice. The conclusion is similar to that of Section II. There is a reasonable interpretation of existing body of laws under which the law is not absurd and the behavior of the ~~state~~ *Executive* is improper, even criminal. But state power will construct, and seek to implement, a different interpretation under which it suffers virtually no restraints. The law, so conceived, has no legitimacy. Which interpretation prevails, in the international sphere at least, is determined not by legal or historical argument -- much as we may deplore the fact -- but by the distribution of power.

It is in this connection that the Pentagon Papers raise some uncomfortable questions concerning legitimate social action. Confirming other evidence, they indicate that fear of domestic disruption was an effective constraint on policy. The analyst recognizes that one of the more serious problems for the Administration was "the massive anti-war demonstration organized in Washington on October 21 [1967]," with the "massive march on the Pentagon": "the sight of thousands of peaceful demonstrators being confronted by troops in battle gear cannot have been reassuring to the country as a whole nor to the President in particular" (IV, 217, 197). McNaughton was concerned that escalation of the land war beyond South Vietnam might lead to massive civil disobedience, particularly in view of opposition to the war among young people, the underprivileged, the intelligentsia, and women (IV, 482, 478). In considering additional troop deployments to Vietnam after the Tet offensive, the Joint Chiefs ~~had to consider the~~ *had to consider the* question whether "sufficient forces would still be available for civil disorder control" (IV, ~~541~~ *541; their conclusion was affirmative*). A memorandum in the Defense Department a few weeks later, was concerned that increased force levels would lead to "increased defiance of the draft and growing unrest in the cities" running the risk of "provoking a

domestic crisis of unprecedented proportions" (IV, 564).

Considerations of cost are the sole factors inhibiting policy-makers from raising the level of violence, so these ~~two~~ volumes indicate. I have found no exception to this conclusion. Among the effective costs are those just noted. It was, and still remains, within the power of American citizens to raise these costs, and thus to restrain the violence of the State.

IV

SPACE → Perhaps the most important contribution of the Pentagon Study is the insight it provides into the mentality of the planners. As noted at the outset, the facts of the war are barely discussed in the thousands of pages of documents and analyses, and the record suggests, were not a matter of great interest or concern to the backroom boys. For example, from the analysis of U.S. ground strategy, the reader can learn that "In the estimation of the MACV staff [operation CEDAR FALLS] gained outstanding results, capturing large numbers of weapons, ammunition and other war materials, plus nearly a half-million pages of enemy documents" and destroying the Iron Triangle as a "secure VC base area."⁶⁹ But he will have to look elsewhere to discover that for over a week before this operation, the windows of Saigon were rattling from concentrated B-52 raids in this settled area, or to learn the fate of the inhabitants of Ben Suc, forcibly evacuated from their demolished village to barren camps surrounded by barbed wire, with a sign at the entrance saying "Welcome to Freedom"⁷⁰ -- a nice touch, that captures the tone of the Pentagon Papers rather well.

The callous disregard for the victims of American terror is illustrated, in a fairly typical way, when one of the backroom boys explains that a program of sustained bombing "seems cheap," despite its higher cost in "U.S. casualties" -- particularly, since a reprisal policy "demonstrates U.S. willingness to employ this new norm in counter-insurgency." Thus it will "set a higher price for the future upon all adventures of guerrilla warfare, and it should therefore somewhat increase our ability to deter such adventures."⁷¹ The importance of Operation

ROLLING THUNDER (RT), the bombing of the North, as the analyst explains, was that "breaking through the sanctuary barrier had been accomplished." ^(IV, 53) This was an important achievement, since the U.S. had previously been a staunch defender of the "sanctuary barrier," as when U.N. Ambassador Adlai Stevenson emphasized U.S. disapproval of "retaliatory raids, wherever they occur and by whomever they are committed" after the British raids against Yemen in reprisal for Yemeni attacks, ⁷²

~~_____~~

But, it is important to add, though the "sanctuary barrier" was effectively broken, the genocide barrier still remained, ⁷³ for reasons that are most informative. A CIA analysis of March 1966 explicitly recommended intensification of RT, directed ^{largely} against "the will of the regime as a target system." But agriculture and manpower as target systems were "not recommended at this time" -- the genocide barrier stands. The sole reason is: "the effects are debatable and are likely to provoke hostile reactions in world capitals." ⁷⁴ And John McNaughton urged that:

"Strikes at population targets (per se) are likely not only to create a counterproductive wave of revulsion abroad and at home, but greatly to increase the risk of enlarging the war with China and the Soviet Union. Destruction of locks and dams, however -- if handled right -- might (perhaps after the next Pause) offer promise. It should be studied. Such destruction does not kill or drown people. By shallow-flooding the rice, it leads after time to widespread starvation (more than a million?) unless food is provided -- which we could offer to do 'at the conference table.'" (IV, 43).

This was Jan. 18, 1966. A report of the air war at that time states that only 8 locks and dams were targeted as "significant to inland waterways, flood control, or irrigation," and one had been hit and heavily damaged (IV, 56). There is no further information here on the follow-up, if any, to McNaughton's proposal that

the U.S. engage in explicit war crimes of the sort punished in World War II.⁷⁵

The DRV, however, reports attacks on dams in Thanh Hoa Province (April 4, 1965); the Pentagon history reports only attacks on Thanh Hoa bridges from 2-8 April; (III, 285) and Nghe An Province (June 26-8, 1965, and many later occasions) and elsewhere. ✓

These attacks increased sharply after 1965.⁷⁷ Eye-witness reports have occasionally appeared in the American press, ~~and bombing~~ of the irrigation and hydraulic system in South Vietnam has been frequently reported.⁷⁸ The Pentagon Papers contain no information on ~~the latter~~ as on most aspects of the American war in South Vietnam.

What is interesting, in the present connection, ~~is~~ McNamara's reason for not breaching the genocide barrier in the North. Much the same considerations are stressed by McNamara, when he argues that bombing of population centers in the North should be avoided because of the risk that it might precipitate Soviet or Chinese direct intervention and "appall allies and friends" (IV, 28-9), a most unfortunate consequence.

The analyst is under the illusion that "populated areas were scrupulously avoided" in the North (IV, 18). This is nonsense, as any visitor to the DRV quickly discovers as soon as he leaves Hanoi. The CIA estimated that by 1966, after 161,000 tons of bombs had fallen, there had been ~~almost~~ almost 30,000 civilian casualties (IV, 136). Note also that the figure of 1000 killed or seriously wounded a week, cited below, refers to the bombing of North Vietnam. As early as December 1965, Bernard Fall reported that "at least one hospital [in North Vietnam] had been completely destroyed by bombers," as "verified by non-Communist outside observers," and that "Canadian officials who recently returned from North Viet-Nam also told me that the City of Vinh was 'flattened'" -- a city of 60,000, he notes.⁷⁹ I have myself seen the ruins of towns and villages not far from Hanoi and the remains of the hospital in Thanh Hoa city, destroyed, according to the North Vietnamese, in June 1965.⁸⁰ Testimony on this matter is by now

so voluminous that it is amazing, a real tribute to the power of government propaganda, that one can still read that the bombing of the North scrupulously kept to military targets. As George Kahin, for one, has pointed out: "If the destruction I saw was the result of 'precision bombing' of 'military targets,' I can only ask: What in the vernacular of our President and our military leaders is not a military target?"⁸¹ The appalling destruction ⁱⁿ the North, which has suffered less than 10% of the total bombing, is small only in comparison to the accomplishments of our government elsewhere in Indochina.

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Later, McNaughton and McNamara were to raise other objections to bombing:

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The picture of the world's greatest superpower killing or seriously injuring 1000 non-combatants a week, while trying to pound a tiny backward nation into submission on an issue whose merits are hotly disputed, is not a pretty one. It could conceivably produce a costly distortion in the American national consciousness and in the world image of the United States -- especially if the damage to North Vietnam is complete enough to be 'successful.'" (IV, 172; 484).

The most important risk remains "the likely Soviet, Chinese and North Vietnamese reaction." The question whether there might conceivably be some other objection to killing or maiming 1000 non-combatants a week, apart from its potential costs to us, is not raised.

The same logic underlies the CIA advocacy of an "unlimited campaign" as "the most promising" in Jan. 1967 (IV, 139-40); ^{analyst} but with the proviso that although "bombing the levee system which kept the Red River under control, if timed correctly, could cause large crop losses," nevertheless the ^{military} effects might be short-lived. A draft memo of the Clifford Group in March 1968 argued against "a change in our bombing policy to include deliberate strikes on population

centers and attacks on the agricultural population through the destruction of dikes" on the sole grounds that this "would further alienate domestic and foreign sentiment" and might lose European ^{and other} support (IV, 251). For this reason, the genocide barrier must stand. Not that everyone agreed, however. See the proposals from CINCPAC ^(Commander-in-Chief, Pacific) and Air Force Secretary Harold Brown (IV, 261).

In an informative analysis of the management of the air war in the North, Ralph Stavins points out some differences, determined by interviews, among the planners. Paul Warnke "opposed the bombing to the hilt" and sought to restrict targets. According to Alvin Friedman of the Pentagon, he came "from a different geological age compared to the likes of McNaughton, M. Bundy, McNamara and Rusk." ^{McNaughton, in particular, was} ~~quite~~ quite uncritical in recommending targets. "Warnke himself said his disagreement with McNamara arose over the possibility that the bombing would draw the Communist superpowers into the war," throughout, a major factor in deterring all-out bombing of the major population centers.⁸²

Such occasional qualms as were expressed were ^{generally} ~~generally~~ restricted to the bombing of the North, more visible and hence more likely to alienate domestic and foreign sentiment, and more likely to lead to world war. On the rare occasions when questions were raised about the far more extensive U.S. attack on South Vietnam, the moral level of the analysis is about the same. For example, William Bundy (June 30, 1965) advocated that "Our air actions against the South should be carried on a maximum effective rate," including "substantial use of B-52s against VC havens." He recognizes one (and only one) problem: "we look silly and arouse criticism if these [B-52 raids] do not show significant results" (IV, 612). We certainly wouldn't want to look silly. If the B-52 raids do show significant results, we may turn out to be mass murderers (since, in the nature of the case, there could be at best partial information about the targets), but this appears to be no problem at all.⁸³ Similarly, a State

Department paper observed that "Saturation bombing by artillery and air strikes ... is an accepted tactic, and there is probably no province [of SVN] where this tactic has not been widely employed" (IV, 398). The only objection raised is that it might be profitable to place greater emphasis on "unconventional war," for example, on winning popular support for the Saigon regime. The U.S. force should be devoted to winning support for its creation, the Saigon government, seemed no more strange to the author, it appears, than that the U.S. should be conducting saturation bombing of all provinces in South Vietnam.

As noted earlier, the Pentagon Papers contain ^{virtually} no record of the decision to bomb the South. Perhaps we are to infer that this, too, was undertaken to raise the morale of the South Vietnamese population. The reader who finds this remark overly cynical may turn to II, 546, where a MACV monthly evaluation appears for February, 1965: "US/GVN strikes against DRV and increased use of U.S. jet aircraft in RVN has had a salutary effect on both military and civilian morale which may result in a greater national effort and, hopefully, reverse the downward trend" (emphasis in original). Not a word, of course, on the character of the bombing, which was improving morale in South Vietnam by "literally pounding the place to bits" (see Bernard Fall, at note 5). So effective was this pounding that McNamara, in a generally gloomy analysis of July 20, 1965, could at least point to the fact that "US/VNAF air strikes in-country have probably shaken VC morale somewhat," ^(II, 620,) "an important matter given the high morale of the indigenous VC and the civilian society in which they were embedded."

This is not the place to review, once again, the bloodbath for which the U.S. is directly responsible in South Vietnam. To appreciate the scale, recall the estimates presented by Bernard Fall in April 1965 -- prior to the outright American invasion, prior to the introduction of any regular units of the North Vietnamese so far as Washington was aware (see below, p.)::

66,000 Viet Cong killed between 1957 and 1961, that is, before the large-scale combat involvement of U.S. air and helicopter forces (see note 4); ⁸⁴ 89,000 between 1961 and April 1965. McNamara estimated another 60,000 enemy troops killed by mid-1966 (IV, 348), overwhelmingly South Vietnamese and probably including many civilians (see p. XX, below). The indiscriminate character of the U.S. attack on the civilian population in South Vietnam and Laos has been documented at great length (see the references cited above), and reports from Cambodia, though scanty, seem as grim.⁸⁵ "The problem is that American machines are not equal to the task of killing communist soldiers except as part of a scorched-earth policy that destroys everything else as well," so that the task of U.S. technology must be "to 'bomb the hell out of Indochina,' as one airman put it."⁸⁶ Furthermore, it became necessary to demolish the rural society, for reasons to which we return. The consequences ~~are~~ ^{are} ~~indescribable~~ ^{indescribable}, and entirely missing from the Pentagon Papers.

The facts, of course, will be denied, no matter how strong the evidence. For example, Brigadier-General W. A. Tidwell, chief of the Reconnaissance and Photo Intelligence Division in Vietnam and director of the Target Research and Analysis Center ^{in 1964-65,} writes that he developed many of the bombing techniques (including B-52 bombardment), and assures the reader that there was virtually no possibility that villages were attacked, except during ground combat.⁸⁷ And no matter what ^{Bertrand Russell} the facts may be, there will always be a Sidney Hook to claim that ~~the~~ ^{"plays up as")} deliberate American atrocities ~~the~~ the unfortunate accidental loss of life incurred by the efforts of American military forces to help the South Vietnamese repel the incursions of North Vietnam and its partisans."⁸⁸ One can imagine what the same commentator would write if ~~the~~ the enemies of the state whose propaganda he so faithfully parrots,⁸⁹ were to indulge in a small fraction of the savagery of the American attack on the population of South Vietnam.

In an era that has experienced good Germans and apologists for Stalinist terror, it is perhaps not surprising to find some who will depict the horrors of Indochina as unintended consequences of military action. Still, even the most cynical might be somewhat taken aback when such apologetics are coupled with attacks on critics of the American war for overlooking the barbarism of the enemy. One can hear the voice of some party hack berating critics of the Russian intervention in Hungary because they fail to denounce the terror of the resistance. In fact, it was quite proper for Russell, whom Hook castigates for such "omission," to concern himself with atrocities for which Americans bear responsibility, either by their own actions or through their local agents. Consider in contrast Hook's practice: denunciation of Communist atrocities, absolute silence with regard to ~~the far greater~~ ^{GVN} atrocities (for which the US bears a large measure of responsibility), and miserable apologetics with regard to the U.S. attack on the civilian population, incomparably greater in scale as well as foreign in origin.

The chairman of the Hue student union, ~~Le Van Thuyen~~, ^{Le Van Thuyen}, was quoted recently as saying:

What we do to each other is an internal affair. Even though we commit condemnable crimes, we can still forgive ~~each~~ ⁹⁰ each other. But it is unforgivable for foreigners to commit crimes in our country.

There is a point to what ~~he~~ ^{Le Van Thuyen} says; and, though ~~he~~ not in the category of Sidney Hook, the correspondent who reports this remark seems to me ^{quite} mistaken in his reaction. He criticizes Le Van Thuyen and others like him for limiting their criticism to U.S. intervention, and not condemning the Vietcong. This, he feels, shows lack of "balanced reflection." Like many others, he fails to see that there are two positions that represent "balanced reflection." One is denunciation of the foreign invader for his intervention and the consequent crimes: Russell's position, and that of Le Van Thuyen (as quoted in the report), ~~he~~. The second "balanced" position is an analysis ~~xxxx~~ (along the lines of Herman, Atrocities in Vietnam) of the ~~xxx~~ acts of all

parties: the NLF-DRV, the Saigon Administration, and the United States, noting the sharply increasing scale, for there can be little doubt that the attack on the people of South Vietnam by the Saigon regime far exceeds anything done by its enemies, and that both are insignificant in comparison with the carnage caused directly by U.S. force. In contrast, the rather conventional position that Treaster adopts -- "balanced" criticism of the U.S. and the Vietcong -- lacks any legitimate moral foundation and merely expresses an implicit political judgment in support of the right of imperial intervention. So pervasive is this implicit political judgment that the point, obvious enough on a moment's reflection, is often overlooked.

Returning to the Pentagon Study, the ^{Vietnamese} ~~people~~ appear only marginally in the calculations recorded there, and then only as items to be controlled by the U.S.-instituted regime, never capable of performing its assigned task; or as infrastructure to be rooted out; or as ~~people~~ ^{people} who must be permitted to "enjoy the inherent right to choose their own way of life and their own form of government" (John McNaughton, describing the "national commitment" of the U.S.; IV, 393) within the framework of a constitutional system that "opposes Communism in any form" and prohibits "every activity designed to publicize or carry out Communism" (Article 4 of the 1967 Constitution, the proclaimed legal basis of such monstrosities as the Phoenix program -- see below, p. XX).

There is occasional recognition that the creatures who inhabit Vietnam may be human, or at least animate. It is assumed, for example, that they have a threshold of pain that can perhaps be reached without too much danger to the United States -- we have already noted the reasons why the bombing "was too light, gave too subdued and uncertain a signal, and exerted too little pain" (IV, 20). The bombing of the North, that is.

As for the South, the careful reader can determine from the Pentagon Study that it was being bombed. There are scattered statements referring to the fact, side comments in the review of the extensive debate over the American ground invasion, or in the course of the elaborate and detailed discussion of the far less

intensive bombing of the North, which was the real "attention getter" (III, 431),

~~_____~~ In comparison, the decision to land combat Marines in March 1965 "created less than a ripple" (III, 433), although proposals for further build-up "were the center of much private debate in the spring and early summer of 1965" ^{WAS} ~~behind~~ behind the scene while the American public was in ignorance of the proceedings"; (III, 445), and therefore merit a lengthy chapter in the Pentagon Study. The ~~the~~ build-up of U.S. combat forces, ~~_____~~ like the bombing of the North, ^{WAS} ~~expected~~ expected to be costly to the United States and was uncertain and dangerous in its further consequences.

The decision to pound South Vietnam to bits ^{by air and artillery bombardment} ~~was~~ was the subject of no internal debate, so far as the record indicates. In fact, the decision and its impact was so insignificant that even ~~_____~~ the lack of concern over it receives no comment (in contrast to the decision to land combat Marines). ^{A similar observation} ~~_____~~ applies

~~_____~~ to "responsible" segments of the peace movement, in large measure. On July 30, 1965, ^{1965,} McNamara pointed out to the President, not inaccurately, that the "hue and cry" over bombing relates primarily to the North (III, 387). There were, of course, ⁹¹ those whom McGeorge Bundy called the "wild men in the wings," but their hue and cry over the destruction of the rural society of South Vietnam had ~~not~~ not yet come to the attention of Washington, and would not, until it became considerably more strident and indecorous (see above, p. XX).

With regard to scale, we read that "From the first, strike requirements in SVN had first call on U.S. air assets in Southeast Asia" (IV, 18; also note 77).

The analyst refers to "recommendations that had been made previously by COMUSMACV ^[US Commander in Vietnam] and especially insistently by CINCPAC ^[Commander-in-Chief, Pacific] to expand the use of US airpower in SVN" (III, 337). He cites one example from each of these authorities. General

Westmoreland, on February 25 1965, thought that we could "buy time" and reverse the decline in the South by adding three Army helicopter companies, flying more close support and reconnaissance missions, and using ground combat troops. Admiral

Sharp wrote to General Wheeler the following day that "...the single most important thing we can do to improve the security situation in South Vietnam is to make full use of our airpower." These recommendations followed shortly after the initiation of regular and intensive aerial bombardment in South Vietnam (see above, at note 5, and note 91a).

After the VC attack on the US air base at Bien Hoa, the Joint Chiefs *considered* ~~the possibility of~~ "US ~~air attacks~~ punitive actions" against the DRV," and in connection with them, a number of ~~other~~ measures in South Vietnam. In addition, they reported to CINCPAC, COMUSMACV, and Ambassador Taylor that they were "considering military utility of employing US aircraft in South Vietnam in country..." (III, 587; Nov. 1, 1964). Taylor was opposed (III, 591), arguing that "air strength in-country is not...going to have a significant effect on the outcome of the counterinsurgency campaign" ~~and~~ and would be "a departure for no...clear gain from the principle that the Vietnamese fight their own war in SVN." He described this proposal as "new." That is not entirely correct. William Bundy's memorandum recording the consensus reached in ~~discussions~~ discussions between Taylor, Rusk, McNamara and Wheeler for Presidential review and decision on September 8 noted that "We are also considering minor changes in the US air role within South Vietnam, but these would not include decisions until November" (III, 562). And McNaughton, in a long list of ~~tentative actions~~ ^(air attacks) ^(III, 571) drafted on Oct. 13, included "US ^(III, 571) on VC targets in SVN." A discussion of immediate actions in coming weeks on Nov. 8, drafted by W. Bundy, suggested consideration of "explicit use of US air in South Viet-Nam if a lucrative target appears" (III, 618); and an analysis of the ~~rejected~~ rejected option of "fast/full squeeze" mentioned the possibility that "US fixed-wing aircraft could be committed to direct support within South Vietnam" (III, 634; it also ~~mentioned~~ ^{"attack into SVN"} "envisage[d] further an early ground attack northward to seize, liberate and occupy North Vietnam" in the event of a DRV ~~attack~~ ^{for} in "retaliation" ~~the~~ the U.S. escalation). On January 27, ~~as the political base of~~ as the political base of

the American effort in the South appeared to be collapsing, McNamara agreed that Westmoreland should be authorized to use U.S. jets in the case of "emergencies in South Vietnam" ~~_____~~

~~_____~~ (III, 687). This seems to exhaust the record prior to February, when the bombing of the North was undertaken in a mood of desperation, and ~~_____~~ U.S. jets were "authorized to support the RVNAF ^{in ground operations in the South} without restriction" ~~_____~~ (III, 391), with consequences already noted.

A cable from Admiral Sharp (CINCPAC) to the Joint Chiefs on February 24 recommended that a squadron of Marine F4's be deployed to Da Nang for close air support for the two ~~Marine~~ Marine battalions soon to be dispatched and "for other missions along with primary mission" (III, 419). The "other missions" are not ~~specifically~~ specified. The GVN did not ~~not~~ acquiesce in the deployment of a Marine Tactical Fighter Squadron until April 6 (III, 455). This reluctance of GVN officials was rather typical (~~an~~ ^{another} instance of "Vietnamese xenophobia," no doubt).

The general pattern through the 1960s was for the U.S. authorities to decide on appropriate measures of escalation and then to try to convince the GVN to ~~_____~~ ^{go along.}

~~acquiesce. Often a particularly difficult matter, as Ambassador Taylor explained in February 1965, "in the condition of virtual non-government"~~

~~in Saigon (III, 323).~~ Finally, ^{if} ~~an~~ agreement was obtained, a news release would be issued stating typically that "After consultation between the governments of South Vietnam and the United States, the United States Government has agreed to the request of the Government of Vietnam to..." (III, 423). The elaborate maneuvering was necessary to maintain the pretense that the United States was responding to the request of the authentic indigenous government for ~~help in resisting aggression.~~

~~On March 5, CINCPAC cabled to General Wheeler that "the single most important thing we can do quickly to improve the security situation in SVN is to make full use of our air power" (III, 429). Four days later, restrictions on U.S. aircraft "were lifted, permitting their use in combat operations in South Vietnam, with USAF markings and without VNAF personnel aboard" (III, 334) that is,~~

help in resisting aggression. As the analyst states, in commenting on some proposals of President Diem in 1961 which probably caused "the initial reaction ...of surprise," "The U.S. was not accustomed to GVN initiatives; it seldom sought them" (II, 446-7). In later years, as the facade disintegrated, the problem of gaining GVN acquiescence mounted. In one crucial case, the President's new program of escalation in February 1965 was received "with enthusiasm" by Ambassador Taylor in Saigon, but "he explained the difficulties he faced in obtaining authentic GVN concurrence 'in the condition of virtual non-government' which existed in Saigon at that moment" (III, 323).

On March 5, CINCPAC cabled to General Wheeler that "the single most important thing we can do quickly to improve the security situation in SVN is to make full use of our air power" (III, 429). (; virtually the wording of his letter of Feb. 26, cited above, p. XX.)

Four days later, restrictions on U.S. aircraft "were lifted, permitting their ~~use~~ use in combat operations in South Vietnam with USAF markings and without VNAF personnel aboard" (III, 334) -- that is, without the (see note 4).

deception of earlier years, ~~when the U.S. provided helicopters and tactical air support for combat operations in 1960-2 (see above, note 4), or in 1962-3, when~~

~~"the U.S. provided helicopter support for rapid attack, transport, and tactical air and artillery support to assure ARVN firepower superiority over the insurgents,~~

~~leading to the "complaint that supporting air and artillery were an inducement to rely on full firepower as a substitute for aggressiveness" (II, 455).~~

PAT the time (these) (explicit use of) ~~that~~ that restrictions on U.S. air power were lifted, Army Chief of Staff Harold K. Johnson was leading a "high-ranking team" investigating the situation in South Vietnam. He returned on March 12 with 21 recommendations, four relating to the use of air and helicopter forces in the South. The first three, approved by Secretary McNamara, proposed additional helicopters for troop mobility, aircraft for intelligence, and target research and analysis "to utilize increased info effectively" -- how is not specified. The fourth

recommendation, with a question-mark in the margin added by the Defense Secretary, is: "Evaluate effects of COMUSMACV's unrestricted employment of U.S. fighter-bombers within SVN" (III, 95; General Johnson's recommendations were approved by the President on April ^{1;} ~~1964~~ ¹⁰³ III, ~~103~~). Directly below we read that "On 17 March...refugee problems were mounting in I and II Corps" (III, 97) -- perhaps, though nothing is said, a result of unrestricted bombing. So press reports would indicate. For example, A.J. Langguth writes that in the spring of 1965 he "watched while a tribe of hill people near Kontum [II Corps] trudged away from their village to escape the American bombing," to be "given a lecture by a Vietnamese officer on the evils of Communism" ^{upon} ~~their~~ ^{91a} arrival at a refugee camp.

In a memo of February 18, William Bundy mentions an incident "in which Communist agents stirred up a village 'protest' against government air attacks" (III, 692). The incident is not further identified. Perhaps it ~~was~~ was similar to one a few weeks later, when, after South Vietnamese planes bombed a village killing 45 including 37 school children, villagers carrying coffins marched ^{91b} in protest to Danang but were turned back by Vietnamese troops.

~~Maxwell Taylor~~ Maxwell Taylor, who can always be counted on to add just the right note of black humor, had ^{apparently} ~~already~~ completed the evaluation ^{Johnson.} urged by General ~~Johnson~~. He informed the President on March 11 that "The most encouraging phenomenon of the past week has been the rise in Vietnamese morale ~~occasioned~~ occasioned by the air strikes against North Vietnam on March 2, the announcement of our intention to utilize U.S. jet aircraft within South Vietnam, and the landing of the Marines at Danang...The press and the public have reacted most favorably to ~~the~~ all three of these events" (III, 345); ^{soon} The Marines at Danang were ^{to} learn differently -- see below, p. XX). As to the use of American planes within South Vietnam, it is not recorded whether the Ambassador's survey of public opinion included, for example, the inhabitants of five hamlets north of Saigon where 50 peasants had been killed in a napalm attack by American-

piloted B-26's several months earlier -- that is, well before the lifting of
 91c
 restrictions on U.S. aircraft. We have already noted the February evaluation
 by COMUSMACV regarding the beneficial effect of U.S. air strikes ~~in the North and South~~
~~in the North and South~~ in the North and South on Southern morale in February
 (see p. XX; also III, 424-5).

~~in a draft~~

draft "plan of action for South Vietnam,"

In a ~~draft~~ on March 24, McNaughton

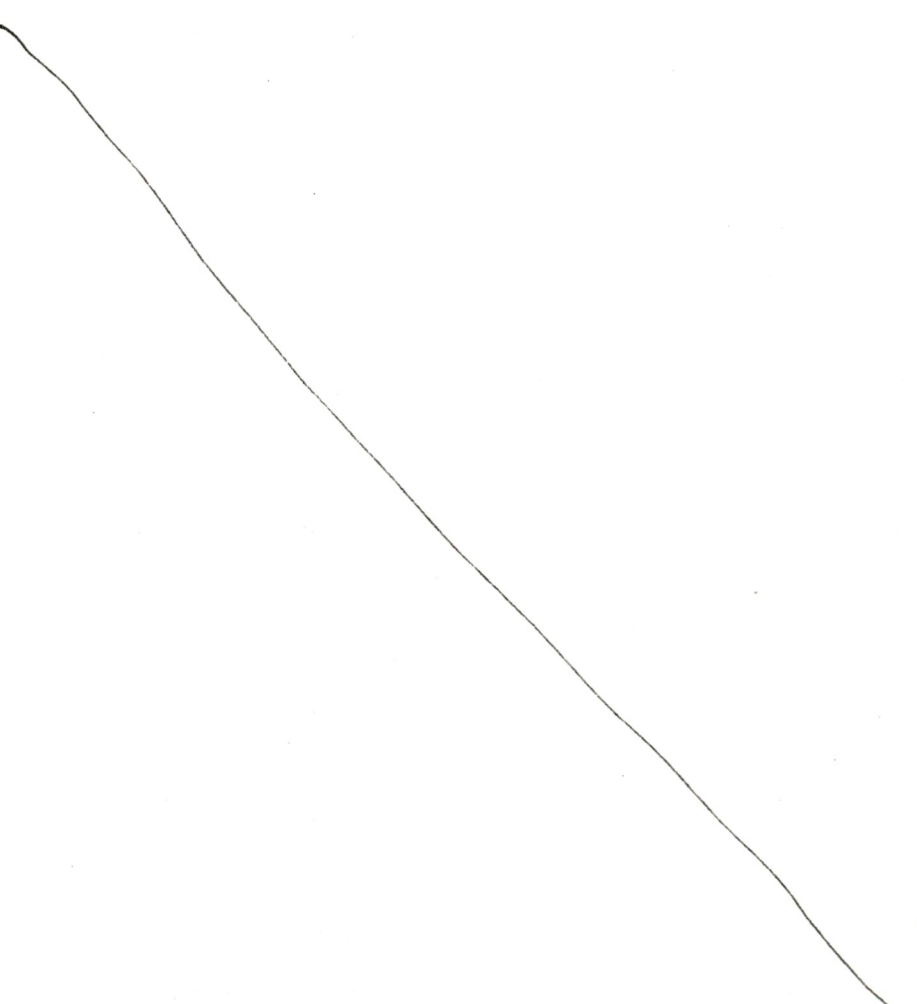
suggested "US/VNAF air & naval strikes against VC ops and bases in SVN," as
 one element in an elaborate ^{(progressive military pressure) (III, 697).} program of ~~General Westmoreland~~
 General Westmoreland presented what he described as "a classical Commander's Estimate of the Situation"
 two days later. In this extremely detailed analysis, he stated:
 "If basic strategy of punitive bombing in RVN does not take effect by

mid-year additional deployments of U.S. and 3rd Country forces should be
 considered" ^{III,} (464). The reference to RVN ^{-- South Vietnam --} rates a "sic!" from the analyst.

We know from other sources that the "punitive bombing in RVN" did take
 effect in one sense, namely, in "literally pounding the place to bits" (Fall,
 at note 5). It also succeeded in tripling the number of recruits for the Viet
 Cong, while providing the "enemy" (in 1966) with about 27,000 tons of unexploded
 ordnance, "more than enough to make all the mines and booby traps which were
 thought to have killed over 1000 U.S. soldiers that year" -- a year in which
 "the number of NLF/NVA soldiers killed by air strikes was estimated at less than
 100."

The tactic of massive bombardment must be labeled "counterproductive" ⁱⁿ
 pentagonese, and can be attributed only ^{had been} to advanced cretinism, if the U.S. goal ^{to win support for}
 the local government or to "protect the population." But it is quite rational
 as a device for demolishing the society in which a rebellion is rooted and
 takes refuge. Hearts and minds can be left to a later stage, when the
 population is driven to refugee camps or urban slums ^{with} ~~where they are~~ (it is hoped)
 no way to survive outside of the framework established by U.S. terror. Then
 the gentle nation-builders can appear on the scene to win the hearts and minds,
 that are left, ^{while} the apologists for state ^{violence} ~~violence~~ speak of the
 unintended consequences of military action.

In early March two Marine battalions were deployed at Da Nang, joining the 1300 Marines already there (III, 402), the first overt deployment of U.S. combat forces. Their mission was to protect the Da Nang base, "which was heavily supporting air activity over North and South Vietnam," and was therefore "a lucrative target" for the Viet Cong (III, 424, 389). The mission, in short, was to prevent another "outrageous act" of the VC such as the attack on the U.S. air base at Bien Hoa on November 1, 1964 (see p. xx.). By April 1-2, the President decided "to get U.S. ground combat units involved in the war against the insurgents" (III, 394). At the Honolulu meeting of April 20 "It was agreed that tasks within South Vietnam should have first call on air assets in the area" (III, 359; McNaughton's minutes, his emphasis). According to the analyst, "it seems apparent that Honolulu marked the relative downgrading of pressures against the North, in favor of more intensive activity in the South." A May 4 assessment by Ambassador Taylor noted that North Vietnam might introduce "additional PAVN



units on order of several regiments...[in the hope of]...offsetting US/GVN application of air power" (III, 364) ^{See p. XX.}

~~...the North Vietnamese~~
~~...into the South. See p. XX, when the expected happened,~~
~~...would now in protest, to the accompaniment~~
~~...of the North Vietnamese as a law~~
~~...peace-loving South Vietnamese people and~~
~~...the same record as displayed~~
~~...in Indochina.~~

"In line with the April decision to give priority to South Vietnam over North Vietnam in the employment of U.S. air power, a major administration decision was taken after the bombing pause [ending May 18] to assign saturation bombing missions in the South to SAC B-52 bombers..." (III, 383). In mid-February the Administration had approved the dispatch of 30 B-52's to Guam, earmarked

(though never used) for bombing of important targets in the North (III, 320). ⁽⁻¹⁾ The JCS had proposed B-52 strikes on an airfield near Hanoi on November 14, 1964 (III, 629). In early March, Cyrus Vance convened a meeting "to consider using the high-flying B-52's for pattern bombing in either North or South Vietnam..." (III, 333). The

decision to undertake saturation bombing by B-52's followed some complaints by Westmoreland ^(with Taylor's "political endorsement") that massive air attacks on VC base areas (e.g., one on April 15, with 900 tons of ordnance dropped) were inefficient, the topography being "more suitable for area carpet bombing." The first B-52 raid was authorized on June 18. Air attacks "increased significantly in South Vietnam" (III, ⁽³⁸³⁻⁴⁾ 384).

There are occasional further references to ^{proposed} "increased use of air in-country, including B-52's" (McNamara, July 20, 1965; IV, 298), but nothing about the scale and character of the air war, or the devastating helicopter and artillery war in the South, as there is virtually nothing about

~~...the same record as displayed~~
~~...in Indochina.~~

the impact of U.S. ground operations on the Vietnamese. For example, we learn that "Vietnam changed over from a rice exporter in the years through 1964 to a heavy importer from 1965 onwards" (II, 366), ~~a~~ but the reason remains a mystery, one of the many that did not have sufficient "signal strength" to reach the higher circles of decision-making. One can deduce from the Pentagon Study that the technological war was not exactly a bed of roses. A "Roles and Missions Study" of August 1966 recommended that "The physical and attitudinal consequences of present air and artillery employment policies should be studied" (II, 385). But the follow-up, if any, is missing from this record ^(see note 5a; the) ~~same~~ report urged that ARVN Ranger units should be disbanded "because of generally bad behavior," but COMUSMACV demurred on grounds that this "would ~~be~~ seriously reduce ARVN combat strength").

To pick up the story of the air war in South Vietnam after the April ¹⁹⁶⁵ decision to give priority to the South in the employment of air power, we must, again, turn to other sources. Malcolm Browne reported in May that "in the South, huge sectors of the nation have been declared 'free bombing zones,' in which anything that moves is a legitimate target. Tens of thousands of tons of bombs, rockets, napalm and cannon fire are poured into these vast areas each week. If only by the laws of chance, bloodshed is believed to be heavy in these raids." A strongly pro-Administration report by Thomas Ross at the same time notes that "there is some evidence of popular

resentment to the expanding use of napalm, a development which is not surprising if one has observed a hospital ward full of bleeding women and children seared from head to toe." ⁹² From this point on the story is familiar, at least to those blessed with the ^{gift} ~~sign~~ of literacy, though evidently not worthy of the attention of the grand strategists in Washington.

Documentation of the air war in South Vietnam prior to 1965 is also slight. A CIA report of July 1962 mentions "extensive relocation Montagnards" resulting from fear of Viet Cong "and new found respect for power GVN has manifested bombing attacks and use helicopters" (II, 687; in other cases, the CIA tactfully observes, "movement has been at invitation GVN"). The CIA analyst shares the concern of the Ambassador, "fearing adverse political impact of bombing non-VC installations and concentrations of people." In December 1962, State Department intelligence ^{noted reports} ~~was reported~~ "that indiscriminate bombing in the countryside is forcing innocent or wavering peasants toward the Viet Cong" (II, 706) and estimated that over 100,000 Montagnards had fled

indent

Viet Cong-controlled areas,

45. 122

due principally to Viet Cong excesses and the general intensification of the fighting in the highlands rather than to any positive measures taken by the GVN to appeal to the tribespeople. The extensive use of artillery and aerial bombardment and other apparently excessive and indiscriminate measures by GVN military and security forces in attempting to eliminate the Viet Cong have undoubtedly killed many innocent peasants and made many others more willing than before to cooperate with the Viet Cong..."

(II, 708-9).

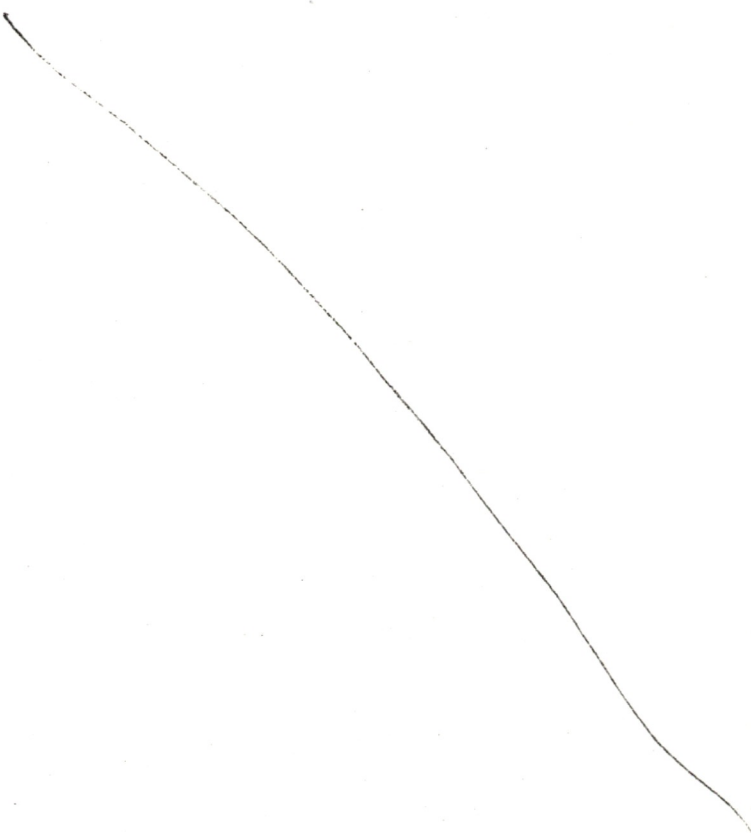
The report further urged "restriction of the tactical use of airpower" since extensive use of air power and crop destruction may provoke "militant opposition among the peasants and positive identification with the Viet Cong," ⁽⁷¹⁴⁾ who recruit locally and are largely dependent on the local population. Their ability to regroup, intact, after GVN military clearing operations "is considerably enhanced by the concealment afforded them, voluntarily or otherwise, by the local population" (696). It is left to the reader to imagine the effects of the use of artillery and air power "to 'soften up' the enemy" (703), an enemy that is concealed by the local population.

Similar concerns were expressed shortly after by Michael Forrestal (II, 717f.), who reports that U.S. advisors, helicopters, air support and arms have led to "increased aggressiveness" on the part of ^{ARVN.} ~~the ARVN~~. The U.S. can hardly evade responsibility for the consequences, say for the fact that "no one really knows ... how many of the 20,000 'Viet Cong' killed last year were only innocent or at least persuadable villagers," in particular, because of the direct U.S. involvement. See note 4.

~~... and that the Pentagon Study ...~~
~~... and before the concentrated attack~~

In April 1966 a task force was set up "to establish a set of interagency priorities." This very ambitious effort, with full interagency representation, "failed to come up with a final list of priorities from which the Mission and Washington could derive their programs...[but] it provoked considerable thought in the ~~United States~~ Mission." In its "first rank of importance" the task force placed "Those activities that persuade the people that RVNAF is wholly on the side of the people and acting in their interests..." (II, 580-3). At this point, words fail. For years, RVNAF -- trained, fully ^gequipped, and advised by the United States -- had been driving the people of South Vietnam from their homes and smashing their villages into dust, and now, in April 1966, it is a "highest priority" task for the United States Mission to persuade the people that RVNAF is on their side and acting in their interests. What kinds of thoughts must pass through the mind of a person capable of producing such a recommendation?

The Pentagon Study terminates before the massive escalation of the air war in 1968, to reach its peak of fury in the early months of the Nixon Administration, and before the concentrated air attack



on Laos, and then Cambodia, presumably under the direction of the amiable and cultivated Professor who is said to provide the President with his more profound strategic concepts. One of the final documents in the Pentagon Study is a cable to U.S. Ambassadors informing them of the decision to redistribute the bombing on April 1, 1968 (what the analyst describes, tongue-in-cheek perhaps, as "the decision to cut back the bombings," IV, 275): "air power now used north of ~~the~~ [20th parallel in North Vietnam] 20th ^{can} probably be used in Laos ... and in SVN" (IV, 595), a grim and accurate portent, as the peasants of South Vietnam, Laos, and ~~later~~ Cambodia would soon discover.

Patricia Ellsberg has described the Pentagon Papers as "the language of torturers." But these are torturers of a special sort, separated from their victims not only by half the globe but also by bureaucratic obfuscation and a cold technology of destruction. Apparently, the backroom boys were so bemused with "the militant and aggressive expansionist policy advocated by the present rulers of Communist China"⁹³ that they could not spare the time for "the heaps of dead in the battle zone includ[ing] many local villagers who didn't get away in time."⁹⁴ In any event, the displacement of the brute facts by weird geopolitical delusions produces a tone of moral imbecility that is only enhanced when the planners occasionally express some reservations over the policies that they are recommending -- invariably, on grounds of the sort illustrated above.

In these documents, some policies are regarded as controversial, but not the policy of "Elimination of the Viet Cong from ^{in part} the Saigon area and the Mekong Delta," for example. It is the task of U.S. troops ^{to} "vigorously undertake" this program of eliminating VC forces, known to be indigenous (IV, 301, 302; ~~the~~ summer 1965). In the Delta, a major center of VC strength, ^{few} ~~no~~ NVA forces were reported during the period covered by this study, though U.S. air and later ground forces were heavily engaged in combat, once the U.S. invasion had reached a scale sufficient "to take on the Delta." ¹⁹⁴⁹ ~~U.S. Army units~~ "U.S. Army units

continued their work in the densely populated Delta provinces," the analyst blandly reports (II, 399; early 1967). We must assume, from his silence, that the documents available to him do not describe "their work." When the U.S. units were deployed, one commanding officer told correspondent Peter Arnett that they hope to "drive the Viet Cong out of the area before they have to reduce the whole countryside to ashes."⁹⁵ They failed. Another mistake, with more unintended consequences. By ~~the end of~~ ^{the end of} 1969, officials were complaining that pacification efforts were hampered by the indiscriminate killings of civilians by U.S. soldiers, and peasants were fleeing the dead gray and black fields and charred ruins of Delta hamlets.⁹⁶

By late 1966, the plan was to give "increased emphasis ... to identifying and eliminating the VC infrastructure," for example, by armed river patrol operations in the Delta (IV, 379), which were to prove "significantly successful in depriving the enemy of freedom and initiative in the population and resources-rich Delta areas" (IV, 539), where "the VC effort is primarily indigenous" (IV, 487). McNamara explains that it "has been our task all along" to "root out the VC infrastructure and establish the GVN presence" (Nov. 1966; IV, 376). ^{The Combined} ~~the~~ Campaign Plan 1967 announces that "The people are the greatest asset to the enemy," providing him with "food, supplies, money, manpower, concealment and intelligence." Conclusion: "During this campaign every effort will be made to deny these assets to the enemy" (IV, 380). We call this "protection of the population," just as "identifying and eliminating the VC infrastructure" is defense of the South Vietnamese people against aggression.

It takes no military genius to predict what will happen to the people who are being protected in this way. On returning from a trip to Saigon in October 1966, McNamara informed the President that "The one thing demonstrably

going for us in Vietnam over the past year has been the large number of enemy killed-in-action resulting from the big military operations (IV, 348, his emphasis). On 17 November, he reported that "U.S. forces in SEA have performed exceedingly well." The enemy "has lost 114,000 troops in the last year, including invaluable cadre" (IV, 368). But there is a bit of a question as to just who these enemy "troops" really are: "the VC/NVA apparently lose only about one-sixth as many weapons as people, (suggesting the possibility that many of the killed are unarmed porters or bystanders" (IV, 371). See ~~the~~ the remarks of Bernard Fall, note 94. With no comment, the text cites the report by the Marines in late 1966 of ^{"5000 to 6000"} ~~5000 to 6000~~ NVA troops killed or disabled and 414 weapons lost" (II, 609). In the Tet offensive, 1968, when the U.S. command conceded that ~~the enemy were~~ ^{"the enemy were"} ~~overwhelmingly~~ ^{overwhelmingly} VC rather than NVA,⁹⁷ killed and captured outnumbered captured weapons by a factor of five (IV, 539). By the same criterion, figures presented on IV, 377, suggest ~~that~~ that U.S. forces ^{were} ~~are~~ killing far more civilians than ARVN forces ^{were.} ~~are~~.

Without describing U.S. military practices, McNamara further notes that "about 30% of the reported gains [in population under GVN control] probably ^{came} ~~came~~ from movement of refugees into cities and towns" (IV, 374). It was surely not the attractiveness of the GVN that enticed these refugees to flee the countryside. The same report notes the belief of the rural Vietnamese that "the GVN is indifferent to the people's welfare; the low-level GVN officials are tools of the local rich; and the GVN is excessively corrupt from top to bottom" (IV, 374). This is one reason, no doubt, why the VC "can replace current losses solely from within South Vietnam" (IV, 371), and why "Pacification has if anything gone backward" (McNamara's emphasis) while "the VC political infrastructure thrives in most of the country, continuing to give the enemy his enormous intelligence advantage," and full security exists nowhere, "not even behind the US Marines!"

lines and in Saigon" (IV, 348). In fact, when the Marines were deployed in spring, 1965, they discovered "to their own amazement" that "the toughest war for them was the war in the villages behind them"; ~~they~~ and they turned ~~away~~ ^{away} ~~from the enemy to~~ a grueling and painfully slow effort to pacify the villages." ^{97a} Their strategy was derived in part "from their own traditions in the 'Banana Republics' and China" in the 1930's, where many of the top officers had served. They were opposed even by the ^{dominant} right-wing political parties ^{of the area} (II, 535-6).

The point was not lost on Robert Komer, who was in charge of "the other war." His recommendation, on leaving for Saigon ^(in April 1967), was to "Step up refugee programs deliberately aimed at depriving the VC of a recruiting base" (IV, 441; emphasis his). Translation: ^{into a "operational reality" drive} ~~the~~ the population into the U.S.-controlled areas, thus depriving the enemy of his "greatest asset," namely, the people. Surely ^(At the very least, he must have been aware of the Motivation and Morale Studies, since 1965; see above at notes 5-) Komer understood this, in April 1967. Nicholas Katzenbach put it more delicately:

"We should stimulate a greater refugee flow through psychological inducements to further decrease the enemy's manpower base" (IV, 508). Again, we must turn to other sources to learn about the "psychological inducements" used, for example, the (by now) 26 billion leaflets that have been dropped over South Vietnam, warning villagers to move to GVN areas or "be considered hostile and in danger"; to "hurry to return to the righteous cause" or "stay to die in suffering and horrible danger"; or warning that "The U.S. Marines will not hesitate to destroy, immediately, any village or hamlet harboring the Vietcong." ⁹⁸ By the use of such psychological inducements, along with measures to drive home their reality, it was possible to deplete the recruiting base of the enemy. By the time McNamara visited Saigon in July, 1967, ^{Army intelligence and} General Westmoreland ~~was~~ ^{were} able to inform him that "The war is becoming more and more an NVA war" because the enemy has "been denied recruits in the numbers required from the populated areas along the coast, thereby forcing him to supply manpower from North Vietnam" (IV, 520, 518). This was the primary reason for the infiltration, as COMUSMACV

(see p. , above),
 was aware though as the Tet offensive was to show, his calculations were the result of "wishful thinking compounded by a massive intelligence collection and/or evaluation failure" (II, 557).

Still, Komer's recommendation was to the point. He writes today that "Up through 1967 most of the forces arrayed against Saigon were southern Viet Cong, not regular troops from the North," but "Today the VC recruiting base is attenuated."⁹⁹ How, he does not specify, nor does he recall his recommendation that this be done deliberately. Komer, ^{like McNamara,} understands that it was not the attractiveness of the GVN that depleted the VC recruiting base. On the contrary, "Saigon's record in dealing with the underlying causes of the Viet Cong revolution is still spotty at best," though U.S. firepower was an effective substitute.

P ^{RI in 1966}
 Komer felt that the growing number of refugees posed a problem, though in some ways it "is a plus" since "It helps deprive VC of recruiting potential and rice growers." Furthermore, it "is partly indicative of growing peasant desire to seek security on our side" (II, 569). How significant and gratifying that the peasants should seek security on our side, joining the righteous cause, instead of remaining in their villages with the Viet Cong "to die in suffering and horrible danger." The President's chief adviser on pacification is only a shade more subtle than a soldier "with the butt of his rifle in the back of a woman he was marching along" who told Griffiths quite seriously: "It's great to see these people voting with their feet."¹⁰⁰

~~The general problem throughout, as the analyst reports, was that "the enemy [is] orienting himself on the population," requiring "an intensified campaign conducted to root out the VC infrastructure" (IV, 434). Unless the VC infrastructure ("the VC officials and organizers") "was destroyed, US-GVN military and pacification forces were degenerated into nothing more than an occupation~~

The general problem was outlined in a force requirement study in early 1967. In I Corps in the North, it is necessary to eliminate enemy forces and base areas "and to remove his control over large population and food resources" in areas where "The enemy has operated for years virtually unmolested" (COMUSMACV). "The next most dangerous situation," the analyst summarizes, "appeared to be that in II Corps...[where]...the enemy, orienting himself on the population, presented a different problem..." In III Corps it is necessary "to expand security radially from the Saigon-Cholon area...[with]...an intensified campaign conducted to root out the VC infrastructure." U.S. forces will "provide a protective shield behind which the Revolutionary Development programs could operate," conducting search and destroy operations against the (indigenous) VC forces and "base area clusters." IV, 433-5. Unless the VC infrastructure ("the VC officials and organizers") "was destroyed, US-GVN military and pacification forces soon degenerated into nothing more than an occupation ^{a Systems Analysis study concluded.} Army," (It was never asked "whether or not U.S. forces should be or even could be profitably engaged in pacification" (IV, 513). We know from other sources, apparently not available to the analyst, that U.S. forces were profitably engaged in the destruction, massacre, and forced population ~~concentration~~ concentration that was a necessary preliminary for "Revolutionary Development".

The U.S. Command ^{found} ~~saw~~ itself "fighting a war of attrition in Southeast Asia," "kill[ing] large numbers of the enemy but in the end do[ing] little better than hold[ing] our own" (IV, 442). "Essentially, we are fighting Vietnam's birth rate", states ^{an} ~~the~~ official quoted in a "startlingly accurate" newspaper account (IV, 587). Specifically in North Vietnam, "the bombing was unable to beat the birth rate" (IV, 227). ^PIn the South, the ~~task~~ task faced by the U.S. was to "build a nation" while "rooting out

the infrastructure" of the organization that had captured the national movement. A difficult task, but perhaps not impossible, given sufficient force. Robert Komer, ever an optimist, thought it could be done. He advocated "increasing erosion of southern VC strength" (IV, 391) and cheerily reported to the President (February, 1967) that "although 'few of our programs -- civil or military -- are very efficient,' still 'we are grinding the enemy down by sheer weight and mass' (IV, 420). Later, Komer was to explain that "thanks to massive U.S. intervention at horrendous cost," a "favorable military environment" was created "in which the largely political competition for control and support of the key rural population could begin again" in this

"revolutionary, largely political conflict."¹⁰² The "constructive aims" of pacification are to protect the rural population from the insurgents, "which also helps to deprive the insurgency of its rural popular base," and to generate support for the Saigon regime -- ^{not easy,} ~~not easy,~~ given the character of this regime, as noted by McNamara (cf. p. XX, above) and others. It was much easier to fulfill the constructive aim of depriving the insurgency of its rural popular base by programs of deliberate refugee generation, as Komer proposed.

For details on how it is done we must turn again to observers who are concerned with the facts. A sample, not unrepresentative, is given in this Reuters dispatch:

"Troops of the Americal Division were burning down suspected Vietcong villages near Songmy, the scene of an alleged massacre of South Vietnamese civilians last year by American soldiers, as recently as last month.

'Within a matter of a week at the end of October, we destroyed 13 villages,' said Second Lt. Norman E. Cuttrell, aged 22, of Terre Haute, Ind. ... According to Lt. Col. Russ Whitla of Ganado, Ariz., the burning by 'Zippo squads,' so named for their cigarette lighters, is intended to 'deny the villages to the Vietcong.' It is part of the pacification program in Quangnai Province ... The inhabitants are ... placed in newly constructed 'resettlement villages,' which are often enclosed by barbed wire ...

If the town is in a free-fire zone ... and if the village has already been burned once before, 'the people who go out know that they will be dead,' the sergeant declared.

'If it's a free-fire zone, you can sit on the hills and see the dinks [Vietnamese] running around, so they call in big air strikes,' he said."¹⁰³

By such means, the insurgency was deprived of its rural base. But that is not the end. Relocation must not be permitted merely to transfer the rot to another place. Rather, the traditional society and the village structure must be thoroughly demolished. The process has been described by many close observers:

'Relocation' consists of destroying the fabric of rural society, using every military means possible to uproot the people and lay waste their homes for the purpose of creating a captive mass of people with their spirits broken in the hope of facilitating easier penetration with the new ideology.¹⁰⁴

It is for this reason that Colonel William Corson of the Marines described the forced evacuation program -- one of the milder forms of military intervention -- as a form of genocide.¹⁰⁵

Robert Komer finds it difficult to comprehend why he is regarded by some as a war criminal.¹⁰⁶ After all, his work did not involve "bombing, napalm, defoliation and other technological means." Rather, he was involved only in the constructive task of nation building after others had succeeded "in grinding the enemy down by sheer weight and mass" at "horrendous cost." His task was clean, bloodless, and constructive: to help the Saigon regime win the "political competition" once a "favorable military environment was created" -- for example, by programs of deliberate refugee generation such as the one just described. He was helping to "build a nation" in South Vietnam. Surely, then, only the ill-informed or malicious could possibly accuse him of complicity in criminal acts.

In the same "Epilogue" Komer emphasizes that post-1967 pacification was "wholly Vietnamese manned and commanded" (his emphasis). His concept of his role is rather like that of the Province Senior Advisor of Chau Doc Province, in a Christmas message to the folks back home: "We of MACCORDS Advisory Team 64, Chau Doc, Vietnam, here on the Cambodian border are wholly dedicated to helping the Vietnamese help themselves and in so doing are helping to keep our great country free." With God on our side, he adds. The full text appears in Griffiths' book facing a picture of an old man chained to a plank.

Komer chooses not to mention the fact, documented endlessly by the press, the Pentagon Papers, and others, that rooting out the VC infra-

Robert Komer finds it difficult to comprehend why some might regard him as a possible candidate for a war crimes trial. The issue was raised by Eqbal Ahmad, with reference to a speech in which Komer explained that Vietnam had proved the inefficacy of "gradual escalation" which permitted the "guerrillas to make adjustments"; the "lesson" of Vietnam is to escalate ruthlessly and rapidly, to "snow them under." In an outraged reply, Komer reviews his career as Special Assistant to the President from April 1966 and as "chief pacification adviser to the GVN" from May 1967 to November 1968 (when ^{he} headed the CORDS program as ~~Deputy~~ Deputy to COMUSMACV, the program being under military control; II, 487-8). The charge, he claims, must "seem strange" to anyone ~~who~~ familiar with the post-1966 program, which he "helped develop," "one of the more sensible and constructive endeavors which the U.S. belatedly supported in Vietnam." Its first phase "was essentially a nation-building effort, an attempt to help build a viable socio-economic fabric in the middle of a shooting war." From May 1967, when CORDS was set up under Komer's direction, the ^{pacification} program "was wholly Vietnamese manned and commanded" (his emphasis), his role being only "to provide advice and logistic/financial help" to the GVN effort. The program did not rely on "bombing, napalm, defoliation, and other technological means" and the "pacifiers" opposed and sought to minimize generation of refugees; "The stress was on local self-government, political checks and balances, and rule of law." 106

In general, Komer explains, his task was clean, bloodless and constructive: to help the Saigon regime "build a nation". Surely, then, only the ill-informed or malicious could possibly accuse him of complicity in criminal acts.

Perhaps the absurdity of Komer's defense is apparent without further comment. Nevertheless, noting his laudable concern that "The record of U.S. pacification support and advice need not be hidden behind a classified screen," let us compare his presentation with the record ^{(that is available} ~~presented~~ now that the classified screen has ^{partially} been lifted.

The "pacifiers," he tells us, did not seek "the displacement and dispossession

of the rural population" and sought to minimize refugee generation. As already noted, Komer is one of the few Administration officials on record with the explicit recommendation to "Step up refugee programs deliberately aimed at depriving the VC of a recruiting base."

Komer states that after the establishment of CORDS, the pacification program was "wholly Vietnamese manned and commanded." His concept of his role is rather like that of a Province Senior Advisor in a Christmas message to the folks back home:

"We of ~~MACCORDS~~ MACCORDS Advisory Team 64, Chau Doc, Vietnam, here on the Cambodian border are wholly dedicated to helping the Vietnamese help themselves and in so doing are helping to keep our great country free." With God on our side, he adds. The full text appears in Griffiths' book, ^(p. 222) facing a picture of an old man wrapped in a blanket, ~~the~~ chained to a plank.

Komer fails to mention the fact, documented endlessly by the press, the Pentagon Papers, and others, that rooting out the VC infrastructure and "denying the villages to the Viet Cong" was primarily an American responsibility, as "part of the pacification program" (see p. XX, above). American armed force was to "provide the shield" behind which ARVN could "shift its weight of effort to an extent not ~~heretofore~~ heretofore feasible to direct support of RD" ^[Revolutionary Development], while U.S. and

"free world" (US/FW) maneuver battalions can "support RD ~~by spreading security radially from the bases to protect more of the population...~~"

^{August 1966} (Westmoreland, ^{the CORDS} II, 588). Discussing ~~the~~ program, the analyst remarks that the structure of CORDS was "so massive that the Vietnamese were in danger of being almost forgotten" (II, 622). McNamara proposed in September 1966 that COMUSMACV be assigned responsibility for pacification. Komer, supporting this proposal, noted that "the military are much better set up to manage a huge pacification effort," since 60-70% of the "real job of pacification is providing local security... [Which]... can only be done by the military" (II, 590). As Komer explains elsewhere, ^{106a} "Given the massive military support required, it made good sense on the U.S. side to put the new ~~unified U.S. advisory structure [CORDS] under military command.~~"

In an announcement drafted by Komer in May 1967, Ambassador Bunker stated that

support of RD is "to be")

~~neither~~ neither exclusively a civilian nor exclusively a military function, but ~~to be~~ essentially civil-military in character," involving "both the provision of continuous local security in the countryside -- necessarily a primarily military task [--] and the constructive programs conducted by the Ministry of Revolutionary Development [of the GVN], largely through its 59-member RD teams," trained by the CIA (II, 616-7; 567-8). It was in this announcement that Bunker reported that General Westmoreland would undertake "the responsibility for the performance of our U.S. Mission field programs in support of pacification or Revolutionary Development," with Komer as Deputy to COMUSMACV in charge of the new ~~new~~ CORDS program, ~~as the single manager for~~ ^{serving} as "the single manager for pacification" (II, 428). The ~~new~~ Combined ~~Campaign~~ Campaign Plan ^{For 1967} of the U.S. and Saigon military forces (MACV/JGS; II, 495f.) assigned to ARVN regular forces the task of "operations to destroy VC guerrillas and infrastructure in specified hamlet or village areas" in conjunction with provincial military forces and civil ~~and~~ intelligence and police. US/FW military forces were to conduct combined operations with the Saigon military/police forces "to destroy VC guerrillas and infrastructure in specified hamlet or village areas...", though it was left to the Provincial forces and the National Police to carry out "population and resources control" directly. US/FW military forces were also to conduct "military and civic action to help win the ~~the~~ support of the people for the government with emphasis to ensure that credit is given to the GVN" (a directive observed by Komer in the remarks cited in his "Epilogue").

Komer's remarks on the ~~new~~ "wholly Vietnamese manned and commanded" program should also be read in the light of his recommendation that "leverage" must be applied "always in such manner as to keep the GVN foremost in the picture presented to its own people and the world at large...The exercise of leverage in a personal manner and hidden from the public view is likely to be most effective" (II, 503-4). We are "applying more leverage in ^Pacification", he adds.

His view was that "increased use of U.S. leverage...must be done discreetly" (II, 430; analyst). Perhaps it might be more accurate to say that the U.S. must pretend that the GVN exists, to ourselves, to the world at large, and to the population that we are trying to win for it.

As noted above, Komer always emphasized the central military component in pacification. He insisted that "we must dovetail the military's sweep operations and civil pacification" so as to "secure and hold the countryside cleared by military operations," and he "put everyone politely on notice" that he had no hesitation in calling on "military resources, which are frequently the best and most readily available" (II, 570). Pacification "demands a multifaceted civil-military response" to provide security, for "breaking the hold of the VC over the people," ~~and~~ to "systematize the flow of refugees," etc. (II, ~~572~~^{573f.}) his emphasis). The most important problem in pacification, in his constantly reiterated view, is security, a military-police problem. In comparison, his position on land reform, though he pressed for signs of progress and urged that it be accelerated "to consolidate rural support behind the GVN," was "that it was not an important issue in Vietnam." "Far more important was the matter of security in the countryside" (II, 400, 569, 392; IV, 441), 60-70% of the "real job of pacification," as already noted.

Returning to his "Epilogue," one of these places in which he is "about as candid, forthright, accessible, and responsive as anyone in Vietnam could be," we read that the "pacifiers," who "had nothing to hide," did not rely on military means, opposed generation of refugees, and stressed local self-government, political checks and balances, and rule of law.

A CORDS report from Bien Hoa Province for the period ending December 31, 1967, when Komer was CORDS Deputy to COMUSMACV, gives a bit more insight into the

~~constructive programs that Komer and his American colleagues~~

wholly Vietnamese ~~programs~~ programs that Komer and his American colleagues merely advised. Because of the corruption and inefficiency of the GVN officials

(whose "primary interest...is money"), "CORDS has had to increasingly rely on the resources, skills and capabilities of resident US military units." "CORDS Bien Hoa (as well as the GVN itself) owes a great deal to these units and their commanders who have unselfishly devoted themselves to furthering pacification." The "disturbing truth" is that "it still remains for the government ^{[of South Vietnam],} with forceful and meaningful direction from above, to begin to assume the responsibility for prosecuting this war and the pacification effort" (II, 407). The Pentagon Study terminates at this point, but we know from many other sources that in the following months the reliance on the U.S. military in preparing the ground for "pacification" increased, the My Lai massacre being only the best known and most grotesque example. Allan Goodman writes that "Whatever else the introduction of [American combat troops] may have achieved it is now clear that their participation in the conflict (particularly in the twelve months after the Tet ~~a~~ offensive of 1968) seriously weakened the ability of the VC/NVA to conduct effective mobile warfare within South Vietnam." ^{106b} Forced population removal and massive devastation intensified, and still proceed, laying the groundwork for the wholly Vietnamese manned and commanded program of constructive nation-building that Komer outlines.

The same period ~~was~~ marked the implementation of another of Komer's ~~uninteresting~~ interesting recommendations, given along with his recommendation to step up programs of deliberate refugee generation (IV, 441): "Revamp and put new steam behind a coordinated US/GVN intelligence collation and action effort targeted on the VC infrastructure at the critical provincial, district, and village levels" (his emphasis). The problem, he related, is that "we are just not getting enough payoff yet from the massive intelligence we are increasingly collecting. Police/military coordination is sadly lacking both in collection and in swift reaction."

Two months later, on June 14 1967, in a Memorandum for General Westmoreland entitled "Organization for Attack on V.C. Infrastructure," Komer recommended

As already noted, Komer had complained earlier that "we are just not getting enough payoff yet from the massive intelligence we are increasingly collecting." Later on, after Westmoreland and Komer's ICEX became Phoenix and was "pursued more vigorously in closer liaison with the U.S.," there was a better payoff, as the coordinated US/GVN intelligence-military-police programs succeeded in "neutralizing" some 84,000 "Viet Cong infrastructure" with ~~announced~~ 21,000 killed, according to reported "official figures." ^{106c} According to the UPI report, Komer is indeed correct in stating that U.S. advisers criticized excesses. One states that local officials in the Delta decided to kill 80% of the suspects, but American advisers were able to convince them that the proportion should be reduced below 50%. Another adviser concedes that "naturally, we kill and torture many Vietcong." "The only way to combat these people who act like animals is to kill them." We treat them just as they treat us, he adds, failing, however, to list the American towns entered by ~~the GVN~~ ^(trained and paid by the NLF) cadres on murder and torture missions. According to the same report, the actual assassinations are largely ~~mostly~~ carried out by former criminals or ex-communists recruited and paid by the CIA, which also organizes the provincial interrogation centers where prisoners are tortured. Other reports indicate that CIA-directed teams ^(that US military men often conduct operations; and that the units often include Nationalist Chinese and drawn from ethnic minorities are widely used; a ~~number of~~ Thai mercenaries, ~~etc.~~) An American volunteer (IVS) reports picking up two ~~hitchhikers~~ hitchhikers in the Mekong Delta, ex-criminals, who told him that by bringing in a few bodies now and then and collecting the bounty they can live quite handsomely. ^{106d} The program ^{was} reportedly ~~been~~ accelerated substantially in March 1971.

As in other cases of "body count," the numbers given and the identity of the various victims raise ~~announced~~ questions. There is ample evidence, in part in classified ^(operatives and) reports, that the intelligence collectors (heavily infiltrated, ^{quite probably,} ~~by~~ by the NLF) ~~often avoid the difficulties and hazards of trying to deal with the NLF infrastructure, meeting their quotas in other ways.~~ As a device for terrorizing the political opposition, however, the Phoenix program may well be effective. Although the actual assassinations, torture, and imprisonment are apparently conducted by operatives trained ^{advised,} ^{(and paid by the U.S., it}

would be)
 "double think," Komer insists in his "Epilogue," to criticize the "GVN Phung Hoang program" too harshly.

We have noted Komer's insistence that the "pacifiers" were devoted to the rule of law. That may well be ~~some~~ true, though the significance of this noble commitment only becomes clear when we explore the system of laws that they uphold. "Security offenses" can be tried by Military Field Courts, and the laws are so severe that virtually any form of overt dissent might be regarded as a violation of National Security; e.g., undermining public morale, or acts in furtherance of Communism or pro-Communist neutralism, or acts to undermine the anti-Communist spirit of the country, all punishable by 5 years to death. Recall the conclusion of the Conference of Asian Jurists (see above, p. XX) that "in the former colonial territories, the Rule of Law is viewed more as a malevolent instrument of tyrannical rule than as a force of emancipation of of protection of human rights." Such was the case under the American-imposed regime in South Vietnam in the 1950's -- a major factor in the renewed anti-colonial rebellion -- and it remains true today, making it possible for ~~Komer-style pacifiers~~ Komer-style "pacifiers" to uphold the "rule of law."

~~"The problem that Komer always regarded as the most important, namely, 'security in the countryside,' was approached by the methods just indicated. Among the most vicious of these programs were the deliberate refugee generation and 'swift reaction' by the military and police following 'a coordinated US/GVN intelligence collation and action effort,' explicitly recommended by Robert Komer, the same Robert Komer who tells us that he was concerned merely with the constructive task of helping the Saigon regime to build a nation -- advising it on how to win the 'political competition' once a 'favorable military environment' was created by wiping out the opposition and driving the population into areas where 'population and resources control' could be effectively conducted by the U.S.-trained and advised National Police.~~

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It is, perhaps, superfluous to note once again that it is Eqbal Ahmad, not Robert Komer (or to take a much more obvious case, Henry Kissinger), who is on trial at Harrisburg -- as it is Daniel Ellsberg and Anthony Russo who were indicted for releasing the Pentagon Papers to the public, but not those whose deliberations and actions are recorded there. Once again, the rule of law.

So far as the bombing of the North was concerned, the analyst concludes that the idea was based "on a plausible assumption about the rationality of NVN's leaders," namely, that they would not want to bear its cost (IV, 57). But the guerrillas were "supplying themselves locally, in the main" (IV, 57), and as McNamara rather prissily explained to a Senate Committee, the North Vietnamese leaders' "regard for the comfort and even the lives of the people they control does not seem to be sufficiently high to lead

them to bargain for settlement in order to stop a heightened level of attack" (IV, 202). Any Nazi could have said the same about Winston Churchill.

This line of thinking has been extended since by a number of thoughtful commentators. William Pfaff, liberal-in-residence at the Hudson Institute, explains that "Ours has been a reasonable strategy," but ~~only for those~~ ^{it was "the strategy of} ~~those~~ ^{those} who are rich, who love life and fear 'costs.'" ¹⁰⁷ For us, "death and suffering are irrational choices when alternatives exist." "We want life, happiness, wealth, power" But we failed to comprehend "the strategy of the weak," who "deal in absolutes, among them that man inevitably suffers and dies." The enemy "stoically accept[s] the destruction of wealth and the loss of lives"; "happiness, wealth, power -- the very words in conjunction reveal a dimension of our experience beyond that of the Asian poor." The weak thus invite us to carry our "strategic logic to its conclusion, which is genocide," ^{107a} but we balk, unwilling to "destroy ourselves ... by contradicting our own value system." As Hoopes formulated it, we hesitate, because we realize "that genocide is a terrible burden to bear." Thus we fail. Neither Pfaff nor Hoopes tell us how they have determined that the Asian poor do not love life or fear costs ~~or seek~~ ^{or seek} ~~happiness~~ happiness. Perhaps this is demonstrated in a classified research study of the ^{Hudson} Institute.

Pfaff and Hoopes are rivalled in their understanding of the Asian mind by ~~the~~ ^{several} Secretaries of State. Byrnes, in December 1946, alluded to the problems caused by the "almost childish Vietnamese attitude and knowledge of economic questions and vague groping for 'independence,'" which was causing all sorts of troubles (~~the~~ ^{citing Abbot McFarland, D D O S,} (book 8, p. 89)). These childish attitudes and vague gropings were perhaps still more pronounced because the Vietnamese had "been thoroughly indoctrinated

with the Atlantic Charter and other ideological pronouncements" and thus foolishly expected American help (Richard Sharp, reporting remarks of General Philip Gallagher; ibid., p. 56). Secretary Marshall, more practical and realistic than the Vietnamese, understood the need for "a continued close association between newly-autonomous peoples and powers which have long been responsible ~~for~~ their welfare," as France had been responsible for the welfare of the Vietnamese¹⁰⁸; and he recognized that "for an indefinite period" the Vietnamese would require not only French material and technical assistance but also "enlightened political guidance" (under a voluntary association); ibid., 100-1. Still another Secretary of State commented that "as with most Orientals Diem must be highly suspicious of what is going on about him" (Dulles, April 1955; DOD, ~~book 10, 901~~); ~~though~~ though apparently Diem was not suspicious enough, as events were to prove in mid-1963.

The National Security Council, equally astute, explained the favorable prospects of the USSR in Asia in part on the grounds ~~that~~ that "its proteges deal with Asiatic peoples who are traditionally submissive to power when effectively applied" (Dec, Book 8, p. 239; Dec. 1949) -- an insight that has been corroborated so conclusively by the effective application of force to the Vietnamese in the past quarter century.¹⁰⁹

Similar perspicacity is exhibited by U. S. Ambassador Maxwell Taylor, who has been described elsewhere as the "chief adviser, if not eminence grise" of the Kennedy Administration.¹¹⁰ He bemoans the "national attribute" which "limits the development of a truly national spirit" among the South Vietnamese, perhaps "innate" or perhaps a residue of the colonial experience. And he then proceeds to speculate about "The ability of the Vietcong continuously to rebuild their units and to make good their losses" -- "one of the mysteries of this guerrilla war" -- and their remarkable morale and recuperative powers and continued strength, for which "we still find

no plausible explanation" (III, 668; 27 Nov., 1964). The only explanation he can conjure up is the dispatch to the South of "trained cadre and military equipment" and the flow of radio messages. It did not, apparently, occur to him that US/GVN operations in North Vietnam somehow did not have a similar impact. It is, of course, completely beyond his comprehension that the true source of Viet Cong resilience may be precisely a "national attribute," deeply rooted in the peasant society that we have systematically destroyed, an "attribute" that arouses the Vietnamese peasants to continued resistance to colonial domination -- the attribute that is repeatedly characterized as "xenophobia" in these documents. The same remarkable foolishness is revealed when overflights for dropping leaflets in North Vietnam were recommended ⁱⁿ ~~on~~ May ~~2~~, 1961 "to maintain morale of North Vietnamese population," as though the people of North Vietnam, enslaved by their Communist masters, were prayerfully awaiting salvation by American bombers, or perhaps by the "networks of resistance, covert bases and teams for sabotage and light harassment" to be formed in North Vietnam "using the foundation established by intelligence operations" (II, 641).

It would, perhaps, be unfair to quote the various contributions of the Joint Chiefs, for example, their suggestion that a firm declaration of intent by the U.S. to block ^{originating outside of} "aggression ~~in~~ (Indochina)" would in general raise the morale of all peoples in Southeast Asia and in particular would increase the determination of the Indochinese to fight the war to a successful conclusion" against the "Soviet Communist campaign in Southeast Asia" (Jan. 15, 1954; Govt. Edition, book 9, 214, 216).

In comparison, Eisenhower appears a model of profundity "in commenting philosophically" on the low morale among "democratic forces in Laos" and wondering aloud "why, in interventions of this kind, we always seem to find that the morale of the Communist forces was better than that of the

democratic forces" (II, 637). "His explanation was that the Communist philosophy appeared to produce a sense of dedication" not matched among those "supporting the free forces." The problem had been noted much earlier, e.g., in a National Intelligence Estimate of June 1953 pointing out the gloomy prospects for the "Vietnamese government" given "the failure of Vietnamese to rally to [it]," the effective Viet Minh "control," the fact that the population assist the Viet Minh more than the French (making it difficult "to provide security for the Vietnamese population"), the inability of "the Vietnam leadership" to "overcome popular apathy and mobilize the energy and resources of the people," and so on (I, 391f.). With hardly more than a change of names, this analysis might be taken for ^{the} ~~a~~ despairing report from pacification specialists (MACCORDS) on Dec. 31, 1967, ^{cited above,} ~~deploring~~ the corruption of the GVN,¹¹¹ the "ever-widening gap of distrust, distaste and disillusionment between the people and the GVN," and its growing weakness. With these words, the analysis ends (II, 406-7). Plus ça change ...

Somehow, the U.S. never managed "to influence the GVN to do the things we believe they must do to save their own country" (II, 623). In October 1966, McNamara lamented "that the U.S. had not yet found the formula for training and inspiring the Vietnamese" (II, 388; analyst): "the discouraging truth is that, as was the case in 1961 and 1963 and 1965, we have not found the formula, the catalyst, for training and inspiring them into effective action" (IV, 349; ^{McNamara's} ~~emphasis~~); ^{Carver of the CIA disagreed, II, 598.} All we seem to be able to do is kill, he adds.

Not that ideas were not put forth as to the proper formula, or catalyst. A memorandum of October 20, 1954 to the Director of the CIA suggested that "a psychological operations concept entitled 'Militant liberty'" might do the trick. The concept was later endorsed by General Bonesteel of the NSC Planning Board (^{DOD,} ~~Book 10~~ Book 10, 777, 975), but it then disappears from the record. The Joint Chiefs, in Feb. 1964, while recommending increased crop destruction and other ~~such~~ measures, also added that it would be helpful to "create

a 'cause' which can serve as a rallying point for the youth/students of Vietnam." A "National Psychological Operations Plan" might help, ~~through~~ they thought (III, 45). ~~_____~~ Ambassador Bunker suggested that the U.S. should use its influence to get the GVN to ~~a~~ adopt a program and identify it with that of a former national hero, "so as to give the new government an idealistic appeal or philosophy which will compete with that declared by the VC" (August, 1967; II, 403). But this ingenious proposal met with no better results than the Ten Point Program for Success proposed by Ambassador Lodge two years earlier. The first point: "Saturate the minds of the people with some socially conscious and attractive ideology, which is susceptible of being carried out" (II, 530). Apparently it didn't matter much what the ideology was. At least, nothing further is said. Somehow, these far-reaching concepts never succeeded in overcoming the "idealistic appeal" of the Viet Cong.

Since the U.S. never succeeded in "saturating the minds of the people" with a sufficiently attractive ideology, it turned to the easier task of saturating the country with troops and bombs and defoliants. For the same reason, the U.S. took a dim view of elections and other peaceable methods for resolving the conflict. The Geneva Accords of 1954 were regarded as a disaster, and it was quickly decided that every effort should be made to circumvent them. NSC 5429/2, adopted on August 20, 1954 begins by recognizing the disastrous consequences of the Geneva Conference. Particularly dangerous was the Communist "appearance of moderation" which gives them "a basis for sharply accentuating their 'peace propaganda' and 'peace program' in Asia in an attempt to allay fears of Communist expansionist policy and to establish closer relations with the nations of free Asia," ~~_____~~ ~~_____~~ The "loss of Southeast Asia," apparently regarded as a serious prospect in the light of these Communist successes, "would imperil retention of Japan as a key

element in the off-shore island chain." It is in this context that the Policy Statement recommends support for clandestine operations (and other pressures) against China and North Vietnam, while preparing the ground for intervention against "Communist subversion and influence" and even direct attack on "the external source of such subversion or rebellion," as determined by the U.S. (see p. , above). The U.S. must "make every possible effort, not openly inconsistent with the U.S. position as to the [Geneva] armistice agreements, to defeat Communist subversion and influence, ... to maintain a friendly non-Communist South Vietnam, and to prevent a Communist victory through all-Vietnam elections," including "covert operations on a large and effective scale" throughout Indochina. ~~(See also Doc 8004 10, p 731 f.)~~

Goodbye Geneva. August 1954.

As the records of the ICC make clear, the U.S. and the GVN during the 1950's attempted to make use of the Geneva Agreements selectively, relying on the ICC to protect the fragile Saigon government while obstructing the ICC at every turn in its efforts to implement the Agreements, conducting a vast campaign of terror in the South, and excising the most important provision of the Agreements, namely, the election provision for reunifying the country.¹¹² Virtually everyone expected the DRV to win the elections, and therefore the U.S. and the GVN "seemed determined from the outset to scuttle the Geneva Agreements," much to the annoyance of Nehru, for example, who pointed out that: "The question is of giving effect to the Geneva Agreements [specifically, the election provision] or of putting an end to them and facing the consequences," namely, a return to armed struggle. By early 1956, the Western powers "disclaimed responsibility for the most important clause of the Geneva Agreements," the elections provision; and the ICC (Canada abstaining) declared that the explicit

opposition of the GVN to the ^{Geneva} Agreements ^{naturally} "amounts to revocation." The British role was particularly ugly.¹¹³ The ICC reported that "while the Commission has experienced difficulties in North Vietnam, the major part of its difficulties has arisen in South Vietnam."¹¹⁴ All discussions that even attempt to be serious note the difference in degree of compliance, easy to explain, given the general expectation that Vietnam would be unified under Communist rule if the Accords were observed.

A DOD study of April 1955 concluded that should the Communists permit elections under international supervision, "there is no reason to doubt ^{(DOD,} at this time that they would win easily in the 1956 elections" ~~██████████~~ ~~██████████~~ book 10, 936), and the same fear was voiced, with various qualifications, throughout this period (see pp. 692, 806, ~~██████████~~ 867, 883), though it was later hoped that it would be possible to weaken the Communists in the North and strengthen the government in the South so that the whole country might ultimately be unified under anti-Communist leadership (1131; April 1958). Dulles had some suggestions in April 1955 (ibid., 892) as to how elections might be avoided, and as is well-known, the U.S. backed Diem in his refusal to hold elections or even enter into preliminary discussions, as required by the Geneva Agreements, which of course stipulated that the 17th parallel was merely a provisional military demarcation line, not a political or territorial boundary. Diem consistently took the position that his government was not bound by the Geneva Agreements (e.g., ibid., 1077).

It is interesting that none of these facts have prevented Washington, in later years, from claiming that its only wish is to restore the "essential provisions of the Geneva Accords of 1954" (William Bundy, June 1967; IV, 502). The contents of the Geneva Accords ^{have} ~~has~~ been so thoroughly forgotten that even Chester Cooper, who took part in the Geneva Conference

and remained active in Indochina affairs since, is able to say blandly that the U.S. Vietnam ^{aid} program was governed by "a strong desire to maintain for the South Vietnamese the independence they were granted at Geneva" (discussing the "basic philosophy of American aid to Vietnam," so "naive and idealistic").¹¹⁵ Thus are myths created.

On the treatment of this period in the Pentagon Papers history, see below (p. XX).

In the late 1960's, the U.S. backed elections within the GVN, so long as they were held under laws that excluded Communists and neutralists who work directly or indirectly for the Communists or "whose actions are advantageous to the communists."¹¹⁶ A Vietnamese commentator points out that "The election laws in the Republic of Vietnam are laws designed to exclude all those patriotic people who have made the greatest contribution toward protecting their country and their villages and who will never be cowed by the foreigners."¹¹⁷ He is elaborating the views of a South Vietnamese judge who had written shortly before that "In a whorehouse society [Vietnam, under allied occupation] if the prostitutes were forced to organize elections to choose their leader, the house's madam can always have them vote for a pimp who can effectively carry out ~~her~~ ^{her} orders."

Since the publication of the Pentagon Papers and the "election" of October 1971, it has become fashionable to point out that the U.S. of course never really intended to bring democracy to Vietnam, but it should be recalled that while the illusion could still be popularly maintained, the U.S. intervention was consistently justified on just these grounds, to the public and internally as well. See, for example, ^(note 52, or) the remarks of William Bundy on the "courageous and extremely difficult effort [of South Vietnam] to become a true democracy during a guerrilla war" and the U.S. commitment to prevent any solution not "acceptable voluntarily to the South Vietnamese Government and people"¹¹⁸ Such ideas are still expressed, e.g., by Sir Robert Thompson, one of Britain's gifts to the Vietnamese people, who writes that "Giving the people of South Viet Nam a free choice" is the cornerstone of American policy.¹¹⁹

Sir Robert's concept of "free choice" provides a good insight into the colonialist mentality. It is explained by Roger Hilsman in discussing Thompson's concept of strategic hamlets, which were to "create the physical security the villager must have before he could make a free choice between

the Vietcong and the government." The program failed, Hilsman explains, because Diem's brother Nhu did not follow a careful program "in which the loyalties of each area were assured and all Vietcong agents eliminated before the troops and civic action teams moved on to the next." Thus "Vietcong agents remained in place," and a free choice was impossible. For a true "free choice," it was necessary to physically eliminate the opposition. Then the villagers could choose freely between the government and the Viet Cong, in their encampments surrounded by barbed wire and occupied by U.S.-backed government troops.¹²⁰

In a survey of the strategic hamlet program, which the GVN claims resettled a third of the population of South Vietnam, ^{by summer, 1962} ¹²¹ the Pentagon Papers analyst (Chapter 2, volume II) records Thompson's "input," in particular, his belief that the program should be "clinical" not "surgical" -- emphasizing police rather than military -- and that it failed because the VC infrastructure was not eliminated. The analyst observes that the "physical aspects" of the program were "similar if not identical to earlier population resettlement and control efforts practiced by the French and by Diem"; "all failed dismally because they ran into resentment if not active resistance on the part of the peasants at whose control and safety, then loyalty, they were aimed." This was evident from the start, when the majority of the peasants refused to cooperate and had to be "herded forcibly from their homes" in Operation Sunrise. Another way of putting it is that the peasants, unaccountably, refused the free choice so generously offered them.

The conception of democracy advanced by our various Ambassadors also makes interesting reading. Ambassador Durbrow, for example, thought that a liberal press code was a good idea: "it would be most beneficial to a better understanding of the fruitful efforts being made by your [Diem's]

Government on behalf of the people " Under the system he envisioned, "the Government should only intervene if articles are flagrantly dishonest, inaccurate, or favorable to the Communists." (~~Doc, book 10, p. 1354;~~ book 10, p. 1354; Dec. 1960). ^{Interchanging a few names, what} ~~What~~ commissar could disagree?

Ambassador Lodge's contributions are along similar lines. He opposed Diem when it appeared that Diem could not "gain the support of the people who count, i.e., the educated class in and out of government service...." (II, 738); ^{August 1963.)} A few months later, he recognized that the Vietnamese generals obviously "are all we have got" (II, 304), but was undeterred by this insight. In his second tour of duty, Lodge came to support elections, which, he felt, should be as fair as possible "so as to gain a maximum improvement in the image of the GVN in the United States and internationally." They should ^{"bring together" all} ~~bring together~~ non-communist groups committed to receiving American help (to defend "their country's independence"). With his concurrence, "the approved electoral law gave the Directorate [the Ky regime] ample scope to exclude unwanted candidates, and prevented the Buddhists from putting their symbol ... on the ballot." Lodge further "unreservedly backed" the exclusion of Buddhists of the Struggle Movement as "moderate measures to prevent elections from being used as a vehicle for a Communist takeover." Lodge regarded these violent criminals (see above, p.), and the Buddhists generally, "as equivalent to card-carrying Communists," the analyst reports. Lodge also opposed a "constituent assembly (a "pernicious French phrase") which "stays around and makes trouble for an indefinite period," preferring a "constitutional convention," which "would meet, adopt the constitution and disband" (II, 371, 376-8, 384).

Perhaps a fair indication of how the U.S. actually viewed Vietnamese

politics is given by the reaction to the elections to the National Assembly of Sept. 27, 1963, "with predictably high turnouts and majorities for Government candidates" (II, 215). At just this period, as the analyst reports, "we variously authorized, sanctioned and encouraged the coup efforts of the Vietnamese generals and offered full support for a successor government" (II, 207), for the reason that the government had so "alienated popular support" that victory over the Viet Cong under Diem was thought to be virtually impossible (II, 201f.).

It might be added that the attitude toward American democracy was not too different, as is revealed in a striking way during the deliberations of 1964. Plans for the February 1965 escalation were undertaken in 1964 with awareness of the necessity for waiting until the President had a Congressional mandate and a popular mandate:

"mid-1964 was not an auspicious time for new departures in policy

by a President who wished to portray 'moderate' alternatives to his

opponents' 'radical' proposals. Nor was any time prior to or

immediately following the elections very appealing for the same reason

President Johnson had neither a congressional nor a popular mandate

to Americanize the war or to expand it dramatically by 'going north.'"

(III, 2-4).

By June 1964, it was recognized "that only relatively heavy levels of attack on the DRV would be likely to have any significant compelling effect" but

most of the President's advisers "recognized the necessity of building firmer public and congressional support for greater U.S. involvement in SEA before any wider military actions should be undertaken" (III, 107). After the

Tonkin Gulf incident and the resulting Congressional endorsement, and the President's "smashing victory at the polls," his "feasible options

increased." ~~President~~ President Johnson was now armed with both a popular mandate and broad Congressional authorization" and could therefore proceed (II, 4-6). . . By September, "there was little basic disagreement among the principals on the need for military action against the North." At an important meeting over which the President presided, this view was advanced "with a sense that such actions were inevitable." But "tactical considerations," among them the ongoing election campaign in which the President "was presenting himself as the candidate of reason and restraint," prevented action "for the time being" (III, 111). During the September deliberations, "unity of domestic American opinion" was regarded as a precondition to escalation, but "during the November debates, this ~~was~~ ^{is} no longer an important factor," though the President remained "cautious and equivocal." In the interim, he had been elected "with an overwhelming mandate" (III, 113-116). Decisions to escalate or to carry out deliberate provocation to justify U.S. response were to be postponed "probably until November or December." Throughout the deliberations, December or January 1 was regarded as "target D-day" (III, 198-200, 207), i.e., after the elections.

It is remarkable that nowhere does the analyst see fit to mention that the popular mandate was not to escalate, or that the Congressional support was obtained in a rather dubious fashion.¹²² It was sufficient that Congressional approval was obtained, and that there was a smashing victory at the polls. The obvious conclusion to draw from this history is that peace-minded people should have voted for Goldwater, so that the "mandate" would have been less overwhelming, since evidently it was only its scale and not its character that mattered. The whole affair is a remarkable example of totalitarian doctrine in action.

A major reason why the President was "cautious and equivocal" was the fear that a Communist response to American escalation would topple the

unstable GVN, and that international pressures ~~would bring about~~ "premature negotiations" -- that is, negotiations that might lead to a political settlement, hence a Communist victory, given the political strength of the opposing forces. Recall that this was a period when, as Douglas Pike puts it, the non-Communists in South Vietnam, with the possible exception of the Buddhists, could not risk entering a coalition "fearing that if they did the whale would swallow the minnow."¹²³

These fears were expressed early in the year, when plans for direct military action against the North were under serious consideration. Secretary McNamara informed the President that such operations were of an "extremely delicate nature": "There would be the problem of marshalling the case to justify such action, the problem of communist escalation, and the problem of dealing with the pressures for premature or 'stacked' negotiations" (III, 504; March 16, 1964). A few days later, the President informed Ambassador Lodge in Saigon that the immediate task must be "to strengthen the southern base." "For this reason," he went on, the plans for overt military action against the North must be "on a contingency basis at present, and the immediate problem in this area is to develop the strongest possible military and political base for possible later action" (III, 511). Further deliberations remained within this framework until the elections.

It has been argued that there was no real deception during the Presidential campaign of 1964, since the plans to escalate were only "contingency plans." The record excludes this interpretation. True, the plans were "on a contingency basis," for the reasons just noted: the need for a popular and Congressional mandate, the weakness of the southern base, the dangers of premature negotiations. To ~~place these deliberations in the category of~~ (plans to bomb Moscow or invade Brazil, if circumstances warrant, is absurd. Throughout the

fateful year of 1964 planning continued on the assumptions already noted. After the election, there was little doubt that escalation would be undertaken. As Ambassador Taylor explained rather neatly on Nov. 27, if the GVN falls, "we should be prepared for emergency military action against the North if only to shore up a collapsing situation"; and "if, on the other hand...the government maintains and proves itself, then we should be prepared to embark on a methodical program of mounting air attacks" (III, 241). In short, whatever the situation: bomb. He also added: "Do not enter into negotiations until the DRV is hurting."

The latter assumption was unchallenged, though 1964. McNamara's fear of premature or "stacked" negotiations was reiterated throughout the detailed planning. The DRV might respond with some military action of its own to a direct bombing attack, which "may have to continue through substantial levels of military, industrial, and governmental destruction in the DRV" (III, 620.) (Such Communist perfidy might topple the collapsing GVN. It might also spur international efforts to achieve a solution by peaceful means. But negotiations, seriously undertaken, would lead to a political solution, hence an American defeat.

The insistence on using force prior to any negotiations should be read in the light of the legal obligation, under the UN Charter, to refrain from the threat and use of force and ^{to} employ peaceful means (negotiations, etc.) for settling disputes. In a parody of the ~~supreme~~ supreme law of the land, the cabal insisted that "After, but only after, we have established a clear pattern of pressure" could peaceful means be considered (William Bundy, Aug. 11, 1964; III, 526; his emphasis).

The same wording was repeated a few days later in a message from State to Saigon First force, under the heading "Essential Elements of ~~the~~ US Policy" (III, 535). ~~Mayhemungda~~ then talk. ~~find no reference to the legal obligation of the U.S. to~~ ~~the~~ ~~negotiations~~ ~~should be the~~ ~~the~~ ~~must~~ ~~any signals which~~ ~~inevitable~~ ~~of damage and number of~~ ~~the~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~policy~~ ~~until the proper signals~~ ~~different damage, casualties, and a~~ ~~ultimate~~

123a

One finds no ^{discussion of} ~~reference to~~ the legal obligations of the U.S. Rather, all agencies saw negotiations as something that should not be entered into until the pressures were hurting North Vietnam" (III, 204). As Taylor put it in February, we must "convey signals which, in combination, should present to the DRV leaders a vision of inevitable, ultimate destruction if they do not change their ways"; "...degree of damage and number of casualties inflicted gauge the ~~imp~~act of our operations on Hanoi leadership and hence are important as a measure of their discomfort" (III, 316).

123b

Consistently, U.S. policy was to avoid being trapped into reliance on peaceful, legal means until the proper signals had been conveyed by sufficient damage, casualties and a credible threat of ultimate destruction.

Subsequent policy adhered to the principle: first force, then talk. President Johnson's speech of April 7, 1965, according to the analyst, "was in accord with the 'pressures policy' rationale that had been worked out in November, 1964, which held that U.S. readiness to negotiate was not to be surfaced until after a series of air strikes that had been carried out against important targets in North Vietnam" (III, 356).

For this reason, "significantly," there had been particularly intensive bombing for the two weeks prior to the President's "initiative." The cynicism of this approach entirely escapes the analyst. Nor does the analyst, in a later section, draw any connection between the general "pressures policy" and the odd fact that, repeatedly, apparent DRV peace feelers and negotiations opportunities were undercut by sudden escalation of bombing (IV, 135, 205). To the analyst, the bombing escalation at these moments was "inadvertent" or an "unfortunate coincidence" (though he admits that the DRV leaders ^{must} ~~must~~ have had "the strong impression they were being squeezed by Johnsonian pressure tactics"). He attributes the failure of negotiations to "North Vietnam's bruised ego," a degree of sensitivity revealed as well by his reference to the "cries of civilian casualties...heard long and loud from Hanoi" when the Hanoi power plant was bombed in May 1967 (IV, 153). Historians who do not unthinkingly accept the framework of government propaganda have taken note of the "unfortunate coincidences," ~~as coincidences~~ ^{123c} ~~for example~~, and have suggested possible explanations that need not concern us here.

It is possible ~~that~~ that all of these instances merely reflected the "pressure policy" rationale of Washington, the general assumption that, in explicit contradiction to the supreme law of the land, application of force must precede efforts at "peaceful settlement" of disputes.

~~until the~~

This is not to deny that the consensus of the planners ^{in late 1964} was realistic. It was. There was simply no basis for negotiations, given the balance of political forces. A predominant U.S. role in determining the economic and social structure of Vietnam is not negotiable, as long as nationalist forces that oppose such an outcome are sufficiently strong to continue their resistance. Hence all negotiations are doomed to failure, apart from negotiations leading to a true U.S. withdrawal, or ^{ing} ~~to~~ ratify the surrender of those who had "captured" the nationalist movement to the United States and its local ~~associates~~ associates.

The volumes of the Pentagon Papers dealing with negotiations have not yet appeared, but in the record presented here there are some interesting curiosities. Throughout 1964 and early 1965 there are repeated references to various negotiations efforts, but one is conspicuously missing, namely, the effort by U Thant that was probably the most promising of all. In October 1964 U Thant told U.N. Ambassador Stevenson that Ho Chi Minh had apparently agreed to negotiations in Rangoon. The proposal seems to have been concealed internally until U Thant threatened to "blow" the story in January, when the U.S. rejected the proposal.¹²⁴ On Jan. 6, 1965, William Bundy reported to the Secretary of State that the USSR, China and the DRV had "called for a Laos conference without preconditions but have refrained from mentioning a conference on Vietnam" (III, 684), and went on to suggest an explanation for the latter omission. Apparently Bundy was unaware of the proposal (as was his brother, according to Cooper). Without further information, it appears that there was a conspiracy within a conspiracy, in this instance.

When the U.S. took over from the French, a National Intelligence Estimate noted perceptively that "the energy and resourcefulness necessary" for "building national states" in the non-Communist areas of Indochina "will

Typically, he overlooked the nationalist currents in the South that the United States was then attempting to ~~the~~ stem.

71. ~~43~~

not arise spontaneously among the non-Communist Indochinese but will have to be sponsored and nurtured from without" (DOD, ~~book 10, 695~~). On May Day, 1967, the director of Systems Analysis in the Pentagon pointed out that "we are facing the strongest political current in the world today: nationalism", ~~Hence~~ "we must match the nationalism we see in the North with an equally strong and patient one in the South"; we must "build a nation in South Vietnam" (IV, 463). ~~We~~ must build a nation in the South, to counter the Communist Vietnamese, who seem to be alone in their ability to mobilize the people of Vietnam in pursuit of nationalist goals. We must "establish an adequate government in SVN" (Taylor; III, 668). We must undertake activities to "add to GVN's strength and image of concern for all its citizens."¹²⁵ "I think we're up against an enemy who just may have found a dangerously clever strategy for licking the United States," the director of Systems Analysis warns. "Unless we recognize and counter it now, that strategy may become all too popular in the future" (IV, 466). The strategy was to wage a war of national liberation based on the aspirations of the Vietnamese for independence and social justice.

Somehow, the outside power was never able to compete. The United States could kill and maim, drive peasants from their homes, destroy the countryside and organized social life, but not build a nation in the approved image. Apparently, only the Vietnamese can govern Vietnam. The United States ~~had~~ ~~had~~ taken on a society and a culture that was simply not fit for imperial domination, ~~and~~ therefore had to be destroyed. It was worse than a crime, it was a blunder, as the realistic experts soberly explain.

Many people who are personally acquainted with the individuals whose thinking is reported in the Pentagon Study describe them as humane, liberal, gifted, and sometimes even sincere opponents of the war. Knowing none of

them personally, I have no comment on this judgment. Assuming it to be accurate, the Pentagon Study serves as a dramatic record of the impact, on anyone, of participation in an odious venture. Decent young men were made into vicious murderers by the circumstances of Vietnam, and many of them have spoken of the process, and its consequences, with courage and sensitivity.¹²⁶

~~There has been nothing~~

similar from the backroom boys, whose responsibility was incomparably greater, and who were, of course, in a far better position to think about what they were doing than a soldier in a village where any 10 year-old ^{child} might try to kill him.

Congressman Robert Drinan, on a tour of Vietnam, was told by a Vietnamese lawyer that

"long after you have left we will conduct our own Nuremberg trials. You will brush these trials off as Communist or Asian propaganda,¹²⁷ but you should remember that by one-half of the population the Americans will be thought of as barbarians."¹²⁸

It will be ~~an~~ unfortunate ~~event~~ for American society if we must await the judgment of the victims.

V

Though in no sense a history of American involvement in Indochina, the Pentagon Study adds many important details to the historical record. As a general assessment, it seems to me fair to say that it corroborates, with direct documentation, reasonable inferences that have been drawn in the most critical literature on the war.¹²⁹ The analysts try to distinguish ~~the evidence they present~~ from the critical literature, but unsuccessfully. For example, the analyst claims to provide a substantial correction by taking note of the May 1959 meeting of the Central Committee of the DRV Lao Dong

V

Though in no sense a history of American involvement in Indochina, the Pentagon Study adds ~~some~~ important details to the historical record. As a general assessment, it seems to me fair to say that it corroborates, with direct documentation, reasonable inferences that have been drawn in the most critical literature on the war.¹²⁹ The Pentagon historians do, at times, try to distinguish the evidence that they present from the conclusions in the critical literature, but unsuccessfully. As an example, consider the ~~question~~ question of the origins of the insurgency in South Vietnam (1954-60). The Director of the Study, Leslie Gelb, has a long analytic summary in which he takes some pains to demonstrate that critics of the war have been in error in crucial respects, adding that "few Administration critics have had access to the classified information on which [these] judgments are based" (I, 260).^{129a} Gelb claims to provide a substantial correction in his discussion of the May 1959 meeting of the Central Committee of the DRV Lao Dong Party (Fifteenth Plenum), which he regards (citing Communist sources) as "the point of departure for DRV intervention," when a decision was taken "actively to seek the overthrow of Diem" (264, 260).

Turning to the critics, Gelb asserts that "Most attacks on U.S. policy have been based on the proposition that the DRV move on the South came with manifest reluctance, and after massive U.S. intervention in 1961." As his sole example to support this assertion, he cites the following passages from Kahin and Lewis:

Contrary to U.S. policy assumptions, all available evidence shows that the revival of the civil war in the South in 1958 was undertaken by Southerners at ~~the~~^{their} own -- not Hanoi's -- initiative ... Insurrectionary activity against the Saigon government began in the South under Southern leadership not as a consequence of any dictate from Hanoi, but contrary to Hanoi's injunctions.^{129b}

Evidently, the quoted remarks are entirely irrelevant to the conclusion they are adduced to support. Neither in these remarks nor elsewhere do Kahin and Lewis

state or imply that "the DRV move on the South came...after massive U.S. intervention in 1961." In fact, they cite a DRV statement of September 1960 as the first official "encouragement of ~~the~~ militant tactics by the Southerners." In this public statement, according to Kahin and Lewis, the "Northern leadership" [made] it clear that it sanctioned formation of a United Front and approved a program for the violent overthrow of the Diem government" (p. 115). As to the remarks Gelb quotes, he himself claims only that "Hanoi moved thereafter [i.e., after 1958] to capture the revolution" (I, 265). He gives no evidence ~~to~~ to refute the ~~contention~~ ^{contention} that insurrectionary activity against the Saigon regime through 1958 was independent of Hanoi. The evidence presented in the Pentagon Papers in no way contradicts the passages he quotes, irrelevantly, from Kahin and Lewis.

A few pages ~~earlier~~ earlier, Gelb attributes to "Critics of U.S. policy in Vietnam" the view that the DRV was "impelled to unleash the South Vietnamese" regroupees "only after it became clear, in late 1960 [sic], that the U.S. would commit massive resources to succor Diem in his internal war" (251). French analysts, Gelb claims, "have long been advancing such interpretations," and he cites specifically Philippe Devillers, giving several long quotes from an article ^{129c} that appeared in 1962. Apart from the fact that the U.S. commitment did not become clear in late 1960, Devillers says nothing of the sort, and the quotes Gelb cites are as irrelevant to the claim he is attempting to establish as those from Kahin and Lewis. Neither Devillers nor Kahin and Lewis ~~put forth the view~~ ^{put forth the view} (that Gelb is trying to refute, namely, that DRV moves to "capture the revolution" were a response to "massive U.S. intervention in 1961." They argue, rather, that "the insurrection is Southern rooted; it arose at Southern initiative in response to Southern demands," led initially by "Southern Vietminh veterans who felt betrayed by the Geneva Conference and abandoned by Hanoi," which, initially reluctant, "was then obliged to sanction the Southerners' actions or risk forfeiting all chance of influence over the course of events in South Vietnam" (Kahin and Lewis, p. 119). Their position can no doubt be challenged, and perhaps modified, on the basis of

evidence that has since come to light, ⁸ But the crucial point, in the present connection, is that they never so much as hint at the position that Gelb attempts to refute in his effort to distinguish the conclusions of the critical literature from the material unearthed by the Pentagon historians.

Gelb further notes that Diem was "entirely correct when he stated that his was a nation at war in early 1959" (265). Pursuing the matter further, we discover ~~from the cited article that~~ that "early 1959" happens to be March 129d 1959, that is, two months prior to the ~~meeting~~ ^{takes to be} meeting which Gelb ~~states~~ "the point of departure for DRV intervention," when a decision was taken "actively to seek the overthrow of Diem" (264, 260). Thus Gelb's account not only does not contradict the quoted passages from Kahin and Lewis, but actually supports them, when relevant details are ~~made~~ ^{made explicit.}

There remains the interesting question whether Hanoi did "capture the revolution" after 1958, as Gelb evidently believes. The conclusion is not implausible on the basis of the little that is known, but the arguments that Gelb presents are hardly compelling, nor do they make the best case. Thus he argues that the rapid growth of the NLF "is a further indication that the Hanoi-directed communist party apparatus had been engaged to the fullest in the initial organization and subsequent development of the NLF" (265). This is on a par with Douglas Pike's proof that the "master planner" of the NLF must have been Ho Chi Minh from the beginning, when it "sprang full-blown into existence" and then was "fleshed out" exploiting "grievances...developed or manufactured almost as a necessary afterthought." The proof is that the NLF "projected a social construction program of such scope and ambition that of necessity it must have been created in Hanoi and imported." ¹³⁰ In the face of such powerful argumentation, one can only lapse into silence.

Notice further that Devillers, in the article cited, in fact refers to the May 1959 meeting -- though Gelb does not mention this ~~meeting~~ -- stating that there was a debate over the issue of "effective support for Southern comrades," and that the

tendency in favor of such support "had made itself felt in the field in the shape of the aid given at the beginning of 1960 to the maquis..." Thus we see, still more clearly, that in this instance the Pentagon Papers add little of substance to the earlier conclusions of the critical literature, which Gelb misrepresents. Furthermore, access to classified information was not needed to determine the basic facts. Rather, as has generally been the case, inattention to the public record has obscured the facts. Gelb's speculations (they are no more than this) as to the initial DRV intervention do, as is noted, contradict the conclusion of P.J. Honey that Hanoi was committed to the Moscow line of peaceful ~~peaceful coexistence~~ coexistence until late 1960 (I, 261), but Honey, who is described as "a British expert" or "the British authority on North Vietnam," ¹³¹ is hardly one of those who ~~direct~~ "attacks on U.S. policy" in the sense Gelb intends.

Though Gelb fails entirely to engage the critical literature, nevertheless the issue that he raises is of interest in itself. His interpretation of the Fifteenth Plenum of May 1959 is somewhat different from Devillers', and though there is ^{little} relevant evidence in the Pentagon Papers, it is possible to pursue the issue ~~using~~ ^(not later than spring 1959 -- i.e., at the) other sources. Gelb concludes that ~~the~~ ^{Fifteenth Plenum} ~~the DRV leaders made a clear decision~~ ^{-- the DRV leaders made a clear decision} "actively to seek the overthrow of Diem." "Thereafter, the DRV pressed toward that goal by military force and by ~~subversive aggression~~ ^{subversive aggression}, both in Laos and in South Vietnam." The "principal strategic debate over this issue," he maintains, "took place between 1956 and 1958." He concedes that during this period "some DRV leaders" perhaps "did attempt to hold back southern rebels on the grounds that 'conditions' were not ripe for an uprising." ^(I, 260.) In contrast, Devillers (in an article dated November 1961) held that the debate concerned possible "international complications likely to hinder the diplomacy of the Socialist camp," though some "activist" elements succeeded, in the May 1959 meeting, in setting in motion ~~a~~ a program of aid for the Southern resistance. As to the hypothesis that the fighting in South Vietnam is directed from Hanoi, Devillers asserts that it "is certainly a plausible one," and he cites ^(as one of several that) an article in the Nhan Dan of Hanoi ~~that~~ "make

it seem very likely", but he remains cautious, noting, in particular, that "to formulate [the hypothesis of DRV control] serves the purposes of Communist propaganda." His point is that both the United States and the Vietnamese Communists have a stake (for different reasons) in establishing that the NLF is under the control of the Communist Party of Vietnam. Therefore, evidence on this matter from these sources must be treated critically.

We return to Gelb's discussion of alleged DRV resort to military force and subversive aggression, consequent to the May 1959 meeting. On the other matter at issue, namely, the content and significance of the meeting, available evidence is conflicting. Allan Goodman reports that "Vietcong who defected in 1961-1962, in part, gave as their reason for changing sides the reluctance of Hanoi to authorize anything beyond political action among the population."^{131a} In fact, surveys of Vietcong prisoners and defectors just prior to the American escalation of early 1965 found "most native South Vietnamese guerrillas unaware of any North Vietnamese role in the war, except as a valued ally" (and revealed, as well, that few considered themselves to be Communists, and that "persuasion and indoctrination" appeared to be the major devices used by the Vietcong, rather than "the authoritarianism of traditional armies,"^{131b} confirming the general conclusion of even such a hostile observer as Douglas Pike -- see also below, p. XXf).

Jeffrey Race's very valuable study (see note ^{94a} 107), on the other hand, ~~lends some support to~~ ^{lends some support to} Gelb's interpretation of the decision of the Fifteenth Plenum, while at the same time adding considerable depth of evidence to the (uncontested) view that the insurrection was well underway at that time and confirming the general interpretation of the origins of the insurgency given by Devillers and Kahin-Lewis. Race includes that "sometime around the middle of 1956 the Party made the decision to rebuild its apparatus in the South" (p. 39). According to the highest ranking Party cadre Race was able to locate (captured in 1962), this was "a very dark period," given the realization that the Geneva Accords would not be implemented and that the Diem government, which had already severely damaged the underground apparatus (with ample use of terror) and was now turning to the countryside, might well consolidate its position. From 1956, the Party's political activity was carried out under the

cover of the "Vietnamese People's Liberation Movement." Its programs appealed primarily, and with much success, to the demands for social ~~and~~ justice that had been aroused by the Vietminh resistance, which (in Long An at least) had demonstrated to the peasantry that it was possible to overthrow the power of the local elite. This, Race argues, was the primary significance of the resistance, (p. 40).^{131c} In the late 1950s, "the revolutionary organization [was] being ground down while the revolutionary potential was increasing[^]"; the reason for this "anomaly" ~~was~~^{was} ~~the~~ "the Central Committee's decision that, except in limited circumstances, violence would not be used, even in self-defense, against the increasing repressiveness of the government." (p. 104).

This is the background of the May 1959 meeting in Hanoi. Though no record exists of its decisions, Race concludes from interviews and subsequent instructions that it "set forth a new line for the revolution in the South," with the "political struggle line" replaced by a decision to combine political and armed struggle, taken after a "sharp conflict within the Central Committee" (105).^P Although "the grievances on which the ~~the~~ campaign was founded lay in the South, nevertheless the major strategic decisions were made by the Central Committee in Hanoi." He reports that the few high level cadres in government hands are insistent on this point, and concludes that although Kahin and Lewis and Devillers were correct in emphasizing "the effect of the increasing repressiveness of the Diem regime in generating pressure for armed action in the South," evidence that has come to light since they wrote indicates that they tended to exaggerate the independence of the Southern movement^{PP} (107-8; recall, however, Devillers' qualified statements, and his reservations on evidence from Communist sources).

The high-ranking captive mentioned earlier refers to the anger of southern Party members towards the Central Committee and their demand for armed action to preserve their existence in the face of the Diem repression of the former Vietminh (in explicit violation of the Geneva Agreements, it might be noted). The Fifteenth Plenum, he reports, decided to permit "the southern organization...to develop armed forces with the mission of supporting the political struggle line" (110-111). Race

believes that the reluctance of the Central Committee to authorize even armed self-defense during these years derived from the concern for internal problems in the North, Soviet pressure, and "a natural conflict between those making sacrifices at the front and those making policy decisions in the rear," who regarded the situation as not yet "ripe" (111). The southerners hesitated to undertake armed struggle for fear of violating the Party line, but after the May 1959 meeting they were no longer so constrained (113). From this point on, the threat of terror was "equalized," and ^{violence} was no longer a government monopoly. The Party quickly became the ruler in considerable areas of the province; by 1960, government forces in Long An province were collapsing without a shot being fired, undermined from within by Party propaganda, and the government apparatus quickly disappeared from the scene (pp. 94-5, 116, 184f.). The revolutionary potential had become reality.

R — Race describes the measures approved at the May 1959 meeting as "stopgap moves intended to catch up with events which had in fact overtaken the Party in the South." The September Party Congress cited by Kahin and Lewis (see above, p. XX) "definitely" approved the new direction of Party policy in the South... (p. 120-1). In late 1964 the situation had so deteriorated that a free strike zone ~~was~~ was established in the northwestern part of the province and 10-15,000 residents were moved by government decree (135, 168). "By early 1965 revolutionary forces had gained victory in virtually all the rural areas of Long An" (140), the basic ingredient in their success being their programs for enlisting peasant support.

~~...the situation in the South was so dire that the Party was forced to take drastic measures to bring about a change in the situation. The Party's policy was to bring about a change in the situation by means of a series of measures, including the establishment of a free strike zone in the northwestern part of the province and the movement of 10-15,000 residents by government decree.~~

We return to this matter below (p. XX).

In discussing the relationship of the Pentagon Papers to the critical literature, I do not mean to imply that the analyses given in the Pentagon Papers are indistinguishable from this literature -- far from it -- but rather that the evidence presented in general corroborates or extends the conclusions of some of the harshest critics of the war. The analysts themselves generally exhibit a firm

commitment to the ideological underpinnings of U.S. policy and its specific aims. One refers to Marx, Mao and "French revolutionary romanticism" as "the most virulent, and vicious social theories of the era" (I, 333). The reader may rest assured that none of the analysts would be so irresponsible and emotional as to use such terms as "virulent" or "vicious" in discussing, say, American military tactics in South Vietnam, or the general policies and assumptions that brought them into "operational reality." For the most part, the bias of the analysts is not concealed -- a virtue, not a defect, of the presentation.

In case after case, the analysts reiterate U.S. government claims as if they are established fact. Consider again Gelb's ^{assertion} ~~claim~~ that after the May 1959 meeting, with its decision ~~a~~ "actively to seek the overthrow of Diem," "the DRV pressed toward that goal by military force and by subversive aggression, both in Laos and in South Vietnam" (I, 260). Expanding on this claim, he states (264) that "Within a month of the Fifteenth Plenum, the DRV began to commit its armed forces in Laos..." No evidence is presented in the summary or elsewhere to demonstrate that the DRV sent its armed forces into Laos ^{by} ~~in~~ June 1959, let alone that this was an outcome of the May meeting in Hanoi. The earliest claim that Viet Minh forces were involved in the fighting in Laos was an RLG report of July 29. No one, ~~anybody~~ holds that to my knowledge, ~~nothing was the result~~ the Pathet Lao offensive of the summer of 1959 was a consequence of the ^{May} ~~meeting of the DRV~~ in Hanoi. As to the intervention of DRV armed forces, careful studies disagree, the general attitude being one of considerable skepticism. Hugh Toye concludes that the allegations were false. 132

Langer and Zasloff maintain that Laotian intelligence has evidence of North Vietnamese participation in the summer offensive. 133 They also note, as Gelb does not, that this offensive followed the American-backed civil-military takeover in Vientiane, the attempt to disarm Pathet Lao battalions in May 1959, and the arrest of 16 leaders of the political arm of the Pathet Lao (among the ^m ~~y~~ the delegates who had just been elected to the National Assembly in a left-wing victory that set off the ^e ~~U.S.~~ ~~effort~~ ~~at~~ ~~large-scale~~ ~~subversion~~ ~~in~~ ~~Laos~~). 134

In the most recent study to appear,

Charles Stevenson takes the claim of North Vietnamese intervention to be unsubstantiated, citing also Bernard Fall's skepticism. He concludes further that, contrary to ~~the~~ U.S. government claims, "The initiation of the hostilities should be attributed to the [U.S.-backed] Phoui Sananikone government, as it was in a Rand corporation study a year later," not to the Pathet Lao, let alone the

134a DRV. ~~■~~ If there was North Vietnamese involvement in the summer offensive, 135 it was more likely a response to the events of May and the direct U.S. intervention than a consequence of a Lao Dong Party decision to take over South Vietnam, as Gelb implies.

Gelb's comments on this matter are particularly surprising in the light of the documentation available to him. A SNIE of September 18, 1959 (~~DOO~~ ~~book 10, 1244f.~~) concludes that "the initiation of Communist guerrilla warfare in Laos in mid-July was primarily a reaction to a series of actions by the Royal Lao Government which threatened drastically to weaken the Communist position in Laos," in particular, a reaction to the success of the new Laotian government, with increased U.S. backing, in blocking Communist efforts "to move by legal political competition toward its objective of gaining ~~■~~ control ~~■~~ of Laos." Intelligence estimated that the total number of guerrillas involved was about 1500 to 2000 at most. It believed "it is almost certain some [North Vietnamese] are involved in the guerrilla activity, particularly in coordination, communication, and advisory roles," though "we have no conclusive evidence." Even this assessment must be taken with a grain of skepticism at least, given the long-standing prejudice in the "intelligence community" with regard to "international communis~~m~~" and its alleged responsibility for local initiatives everywhere in Indochina (see pp. XX, below). *P Reviewing the evidences* ~~it~~ ^{by} will hardly do to describe the situation in Laos in the summer of 1959 by stating, with not a word of additional background: "Within a ~~■~~ month of the Fifteenth Plenum, the DRV ~~■~~ began to commit its armed forces in Laos, and steadily escalated its aid to the Pathet Lao," pressing toward the goal of overthrowing Diem ~~by~~ ~~_____~~ military force and subversive aggression.

his

Continuing with ~~the~~ discussion of consequences of the May 1959 meeting in Hanoi, Gelb states: "moreover, by ~~the~~ [December, 1960], the Soviet Union had entered the fray, and was participating in airlift operations from North Vietnam direct to Pathet Lao - NVA units in Laos." The remark does not quite do justice to the actual situation. The Soviet airlift, which began in December 1960, was in support of the pro-Western Souvanna Phouma and the neutralist Kong Le, whose government was under attack by ~~the~~ right-wing troops backed by the CIA and ~~the~~ U.S. military after a long period of well-documented American subversion. ^{conveys} ~~the~~ the impression There is not a hint of this in Gelb's account, which ~~conveys the impression~~ ~~of a Communist initiative to subvert Laotian independence, set in motion by the May 1959 meeting of the Lao Dong Party in Central Committee in Hanoi, and by the end of 1960 involving also the Soviet Union. and Chinese policy seems to have bent to [Hanoi's] ends," namely, reunification and "Vietnamese hegemony in Southeast Asia" (I, 265). This is an amazing construction to found on the ~~the~~ evidence that ~~he~~ presents, and when the ~~the~~ factual gaps are filled, as in the cases just noted, his ^{proposal} ~~proposal~~ seems little more than a flight of fancy. ^(Palla in all, Gelb's) ~~references~~ to Laos are hardly more than a repetition of U.S. government propaganda that is generally discounted even by ~~the~~ highly sympathetic historians, ~~the~~ ^{to illustrate} ~~the~~~~

One further example, from a different part of the study, may suffice ^{to illustrate} the tendency to accept U.S. government claims uncritically unless they are conclusively refuted by the evidence at hand, often with neglect of evidence that is not in serious dispute. Consider the explanation of why the Wilson-Kosygin peace initiative failed during the Tet Truce of February 1967. The reason, according to the analyst, is that "the enormous DRV resupply effort force[d] the President to resume the bombing..." (IV, 9, 139, 143). The careful reader will note that these alleged violations of the truce consisted only of "the massive North Vietnamese effort to move supplies into its southern panhandle" (IV, 143), that is, movement of supplies within North Vietnam. The U.S. Command issued no reports of traffic moving south of Dong Hoi, about 40 miles north of the 17th parallel, and had no way of knowing whether the sighted convoys were supplying the millions of people in the southern panhandle who had been living under merciless bombardment.

Meanwhile, unremarked by the analyst, the U.S. was not only moving supplies westward towards California and across the Pacific, but was setting a one-day record on the first day of the truce for air-delivered cargo to units in the field. U.S. planes

more than

alone carried ^{more than} 7000 tons of supplies and ~~more than~~ 17,000 men during the first three days of the cease-fire -- ~~in~~ South Vietnam. Reporters described long files of trucks, protected by tanks and helicopters, hauling munitions to the outskirts of VC-controlled Zone C, though U.S. sources in Vietnam tried to conceal this fact in misleading dispatches. Immediately after the truce, ^{Operation} Junction City was launched against Zone C. According to AFP in Le Monde, the offensive had been prepared during the Tet truce. The U.S. press mentioned neither this matter, nor a Parliamentary debate in London inspired by the facts brought together by ~~_____~~ I. F. ¹³⁶ Stone. The Pentagon ~~_____~~ conceded Stone's charges, with this amazing comment: "The point that Mr. Stone is missing is that we have air and naval supremacy and have no need of a truce of any kind to move supplies." Therefore, the onus falls entirely on North Vietnam for violating the truce by the unconscionable act of moving supplies within its own territory, thus forcing the President to resume bombing and dashing hopes for a negotiated settlement. Stone describes the whole incident as the government's most "successful Operation Brain Wash." No brains were washed more successfully than those of the Pentagon historian, who continued blithely to repeat government propaganda, oblivious to uncontested facts.¹³⁷

However, though the analyst misrepresents the facts, he probably does accurately depict the perception of the facts in Washington. Chester Cooper, who was involved in the London negotiations at the time, reports that the President decided to renew the bombing despite the ongoing Wilson-Kosygin efforts: "The North Vietnamese troop movements over the past several days had apparently thrown Washington into panic."¹³⁸

~~If Cooper is aware of the relevant facts, there is no record of it.~~

The incident is interesting, not only as an illustration of the pro-government bias of the analyst, but also, once again, as an indication of the power of government propaganda to overwhelm the facts, given the ^{general} ~~_____~~ submissiveness of the mass media. ^{complain so bitterly when} It is easy to comprehend why statist ideologues ~~_____~~ the press begins to show some signs of intellectual independence.

~~_____~~
~~_____~~
~~_____~~

A more subtle, and rather pervasive bias is well illustrated by other comments of Gelb's in the analytic summary cited above. He notes that "no direct links have been established between Hanoi and perpetrators of rural violence" in the 1956-59 period (I, 243). By the phrase "perpetrators of rural violence," he does not refer to President Diem and his associates, who organized massive expeditions ~~in~~ in 1956 to peaceful Communist-controlled regions killing hundreds, perhaps thousands of peasants and destroying whole villages by artillery bombardment, nor to the "vengeful acts" of the South Vietnamese army in areas where the Viet Minh had withdrawn after Geneva, "arbitrarily arresting, harassing, and torturing the population and even shooting the villagers." ^{138b} In this regard, Gelb merely states ~~that~~ that: "At least through 1957, Diem and his government enjoyed marked success with ~~for~~ fairly sophisticated pacification programs in the countryside" (254), though he concedes that Diem instituted "oppressive measures" such as the so-called "political reeducation centers" which "were in fact little more than concentration camps for the potential foes of the government" and a "Communist Denunciation Campaign" which "thoroughly terrified the Vietnamese peasants" (253, 255). But he concludes that the Diem regime "compared favorably with other Asian governments of the same period in its respect for the person and property of citizens" (253; in particular, for the property of the 2% of landowners who owned 45% of the land by 1960; 254). And phrases such as "perpetrators of rural violence" are, typically, restricted to the resistance in South Vietnam.

We learn a little more about Diem's sophisticated pacification programs in the countryside from the ^{accompanying} ~~historical~~ historical analysis. "In early 1955, ARVN units were sent to establish the GVN in the Camau Peninsula... Poorly led, ill-trained, and heavy-handed, the troops behaved towards the people very much as the Viet Minh had led the farmers to expect" (I, 306; the Camau experience, ^{the analyst} ~~he~~ adds, was "more typical of the ARVN than the Binh Dinh affair," which "went off more smoothly" and, he claims, revealed popular hostility to the Viet Minh). ^(In Interrogations) ~~Interrogations~~ of prisoners and defectors, the analyst reports, ~~the~~ most "spoke of ~~the~~ terror, brutality

and torture by GVN rural officials in carrying out the Communist Denunciation campaigns, and of the arrest and slaying of thousands of old comrades from the 'resistance'" (I, 329). They also "spoke of making person-to-person persuasion to bring in new members for the movement, relying mainly on two appeals: nationalism and social justice." The analyst concludes that many were not "dedicated communists in the doctrinaire sense," that "the Viet Minh" were widely admired throughout the South as national heroes," and that "the GVN created by its rural policy a climate of moral indignation which energized the peasants politically, turned them against the government, sustained the Viet Cong, and permitted 'communists' to outlast severe GVN repressions and even to recruit during it" (329-30). Thus the unqualified ~~anti~~ anti-Viet Minh campaign of the GVN was "a tactical error of the first magnitude."

Race reaches some rather similar conclusions in his far more detailed study. Until 1959, the government had a ^{monopoly} ~~monopoly~~ on violence and ^{by employing it,} ~~succeeded in demonstrating~~ to the ~~population~~ population that there was no alternative to violence. The Party maintained an official policy of nonviolence, with the exception of the "extermination of traitors" policy undertaken in response to government terror in order to protect the existence of the ^{Party} party. Although abstention from violence in the face of mounting government terror cost the ~~Party~~ Party dearly, the policy helped create the "revolutionary potential" that quickly turned the tide when the Central Committee rescinded its prohibition against armed struggle, ~~(pp. 184, 82-4, 113f.)~~ and "the threat was equalized for both sides" (pp. 184, 82-4, ~~113~~ 113f.). Much the same was true in subsequent years: ~~the government terrorized~~ "...the government terrorized far more than did the revolutionary movement -- for example, by liquidations of former Vietminh, ~~by artillery and ground attacks on 'communist villages,' and by roundups of 'communist sympathizers.'~~ led to the constantly increasing strength of the revolutionary movement in Long Yet it was just these tactics that An from 1960 to 1965" (p. 197).

The fundamental source of strength for the revolutionary movement was the appeal of its constructive programs, for example, the land program, which "achieved a far broader distribution of land than did the government program, and without the killing and terror which is associated in the minds of Western readers with communist

practices in land reform" (p. 166; in this case too, "the principal violence was brought about not by the Party, but by the government, in its attempts to reinstall the landlords"). The lowest economic strata benefited the most ^{from} ~~by~~ (the redistributive policies of the Party. Authority was decentralized and placed in the hands of local people, in contrast to the rule of the GVN, perceived (accurately) as "outside forces" by major segments of the local population (p. 169f.); "what attracted people to the revolutionary movement was that it represented a new society in which there would be an individual redistribution of values, including power and status as well as material possessions" (p. 176). "The Party leadership...structured its forces so that they were inextricably bound into the social fabric of rural ~~communities~~ communities by ties of ~~the~~ family, friendship, and common interest" (p. 177). Thus forces were of local origin, locally supplied, and oriented towards ~~the~~ local interests.

Returning to Gelb's ~~the~~ form of expression, something is surely overlooked when the local cadres are portrayed simply as "perpetrators of rural violence."

The same summary and analysis (I, 242-69) gives a remarkable interpretation of the post-Geneva period (see above, pp. XXf.). In Gelb's view, the U.S. and the GVN, though not "fully cooperative," nevertheless "considered themselves constrained by the Accords" and did not "deliberately...breach the peace." 138c
 "In contrast, the DRV proceeded to mobilize its total societal resources scarcely without pause from the day the peace was signed, as though to substantiate the declaration" ~~of~~ of Pham Van Dong that "We shall achieve unity" (I, 250). Thus by mobilizing its total societal resources for social and economic reconstruction, the DRV clearly demonstrated its intent to upset the Accords, "in contrast" to the peace-loving GVN and U.S., who were merely maintaining the status quo as established at Geneva. The DRV could have demonstrated its sincerity only by succumbing to the famine that appeared imminent in 1954, ^{refraining from programs of economic development,} and permitting the U.S. to succeed in its efforts to undermine it. 138d

Gelb concedes that "it is possible...to accept the view that through

1958 the DRV)

still accorded priority to butter over guns, as part of its base development strategy," namely, the strategy of making the North "a large rear echelon of our army," "the revolutionary base for the whole country," in General Giap's words of January 1960 (263-4). But these priorities changed, Gelb believes, at the May 1959 meeting.) ~~We have already discussed his evidence for the latter conclusion.~~

Comparing Gelb's remarks with the facts that he cites, ~~we might say~~ we might say, with somewhat greater precision, that the facts permit no interpretation other than the view he finds it possible to accept, namely, that the DRV through 1958 accorded priority to butter over guns (and, as he notes, ~~as~~ Honey, as well as others, believe this to be the case through 1960). The claim that this concern for internal development through 1958 was nothing other than a part of the "base development strategy" ~~is supported by no particle of evidence. It is,~~ is supported by no particle of evidence. It is, presumably, a logical possibility at least that the North Vietnamese leadership was interested in economic development for reasons other than "as part of its base development strategy", just as it is possible to ^{imagine that} ~~the mobilization of~~ the mobilization of ~~their~~ "total societal resources" for ~~internal development~~ internal development might have some explanation other than the intention to disrupt the ~~Geneva agreements~~. But these alternative possibilities arise only ~~on~~ on the assumption that the Viet Minh leadership had some concern for the welfare of the Vietnamese people, and it would appear that this ^{hypothesis} ~~is~~ is excluded by the ^{canons} ~~of~~ of neutral scholarship.

In fact, Gelb's logic is rather like that of ~~a~~ Dean Acheson when he declared in 1950 that recognition of Ho Chi Minh by China and the USSR "should remove any illusion as to the nationalist character of Ho Chi Minh's aims and reveals Ho in his true colors as the mortal enemy of native independence in Vietnam" (I, 51). To Acheson, apparently, Ho could prove his nationalist credentials only by capitulating to the French, who were defending liberty and national independence in Vietnam against the assault of the Vietminh.

There is hardly a page of this summary and analysis section that is not misleading or inaccurate in some respect. To cite one final example, consider Gelb's remark that the refugees from the North after the Geneva settlement "provided the world the earliest ~~and~~ convincing evidence of the undemocratic and oppressive nature of North Vietnam's regime...the refugees were the most convincing support for Diem's argument that free elections were impossible in the DRV" (I, 248).

One may argue that the DRV regime was undemocratic and oppressive and that elections conducted there would not be free, but it is patently absurd to point to the flight of the refugees as "convincing evidence" for these judgments. It would be rational to argue that the flight of the refugees indicated a fear that the regime would be undemocratic and appressive -- ^{to argue,} in the analyst's phrase, that "The flight from North Vietnam reflected apprehension over the coming to power of the Viet Minh" (I, 291). Even this statement is misleading unless it is also noted that many of the predominantly Catholic refugees had been French collaborators and had even been mobilized in "an autonomous Vietnamese militia against the Vietminh" ^{138e}.

Would Gelb argue that the flight of Loyalists to Canada provided the world with the earliest convincing evidence of the undemocratic and oppressive nature of George Washington's regime, and ^{showed} ~~that free elections were~~ ^{138f} impossible in the United States?

The analytic summary of the post-Geneva period is unusual in the degree of misrepresentation, and ~~misrepresentation~~ contrasts unfavorably with other summaries, some of which are quite perceptive. As to the reasons for this, one can only speculate. The summary seeks to establish that the U.S. and GVN accepted the Geneva settlement more or less in good faith, and that blame for disrupting the peaceful status quo in Laos and South Vietnam lies primarily with the DRV (and its Russian ally, drawn in by Hanoi). From it, a reader who knows nothing of events in Indochina or of the critical literature (and who does not note the disparity between what is alleged to be true of the critical literature and what is actually quoted) might draw the conclusion that critics of the war are ^{misguided in} ~~misguided in~~ their "attacks on U.S. policy." Rather, they should be directing attacks on the DRV and its allies and

should support the U.S. "reaction" to the aggression from the North. The U.S. government White Papers of 1961 and 1965 quite explicitly attempted to demonstrate just this. [REDACTED]

Gelb's misrepresentation of the views of critics of the war also serves the ends of government propaganda in a slightly more subtle way. In the view of the critics ^{he cites,} DRV intervention was a response to a situation that developed ^{within the} Southern ^{dictatorship established by the United States,} [REDACTED] In Gelb's revision of their views, the contention is that the DRV intervention was a response to ^{massive} U.S. intervention ^{in the early 1960s.} The critics focussed attention on internal Vietnamese affairs. Gelb reformulates their argument, shifting the focus to an interaction between the U.S. and the DRV. Whatever may have been on his mind, the fact is that this move is typical of U.S. government propaganda, which seeks to show that the people of the South are victims of aggression from the North, with the U.S. coming to their defense. In this framework, the interaction between the U.S. and North Vietnam is the central element in the conflict, not the internal situation in South Vietnam. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The government has half won the argument if critics accept its framework and then debate the timing of the ~~1964~~ US-DRV interaction, neglecting the Southern insurgency. ^{138g} It is interesting, therefore, that Gelb recasts the argument of the critics within the framework of government propaganda, eliminating the central concern with the Southern insurgency (though the reader can detect it from the quotes he cites) and placing US-DRV interaction in the foreground. [REDACTED] Had the critics formulated their position in his terms, they would have tacitly conceded a significant part of the government's case.

In this connection, four points might be mentioned. In the first place, as has already been shown, Gelb's account is shot through with misrepresentation. Secondly, it is striking that these distortions are so excessive in a discussion [REDACTED] of the "origins of the insurgency in South Vietnam" (the chapter title), a question that might be regarded as crucial for determining one's attitude towards "massive

~~the U.S. "reaction" to the aggression of North Vietnam~~

~~White Paper of 1961 and 1965 quite explicitly attempt to establish~~

~~the question of a "right" of the United States to intervene~~

~~in the internal affairs of another country, a crucial one, in determining one's attitude towards~~

~~U.S. intervention in 1961~~

~~In connection, three points might be mentioned. First, as already~~

~~stated, the account is not through with misrepresentation. Second, Gelb claims~~

U.S. intervention in 1961." Thirdly, Gelb claims only that information that appeared long after the events supports the interpretation

he proposes. ~~A~~ A rational person will evaluate an action in the light of evidence

available to those who carried it out. A murderer is no less guilty if later

evidence reveals that without his knowledge his victim was just about to commit

some horrible crime. ^{Finally,} ~~a~~ a critic of the American intervention who bases

his criticism on the principle that the United States has no unique right to engage in forceful intervention in the internal affairs of others, or who simply believes

that the U.S. executive should be bound by established law, would in no way be

swayed from his condemnation of the ^{escalated} ~~U.S.~~ U.S. intervention ^{of 1961} even if it had been

shown that the facts were as Gelb presents them, and were known to the U.S. executive

at the time. Since this is clear from the critical literature that Gelb misrepresents,

and from earlier discussion here, I will pursue this matter no further at this point.

When the Pentagon study appeared there was loud protest that it was biased,

misleading, a ^{chorus} ~~of~~ of doves, etc. In a sense, this is correct. The analysts

do in general seem to believe that the U.S. involvement in Vietnam may well have

been a costly error. At the same time, they tend to accept uncritically the

framework of official ideology, and rarely question government assertions. As the

term has been used in American political discourse, they are doves, by and large.

^{As has already been noted, the} ~~work~~ work of the analysts must be understood as a distillation of the

documentary record that they were studying -- they claim ~~more~~ little more than

this -- and it is not therefore surprising that the ~~implicit~~ implicit assumptions in

this record are generally carried over into their work. With this limitation, ~~the~~

the analyses are often excellent, intelligent, and ~~very~~ illuminating. There is also some variety in the character of the analyses, difficult to discuss in view of the way the work was done and the anonymity of the presentation -- one cannot know, for example, to what extent a particular section was the work of a single author. See Leslie Gelb's introductory "Letter of transmittal" for such information as there is. Furthermore, it must be kept in mind that this material was not prepared for publication. Undoubtedly it would have been revised and corrected, had it been intended for publication. Finally, footnotes are missing, ~~and~~ and it is therefore impossible to know what qualifications and further comments they might contain. The general bias of the analysts must, however, be appreciated by anyone who hopes to make serious use of this material. Disinterested scholarship on contemporary affairs is something of an illusion, though it is not unusual for a commitment to the dominant ideology to be mistaken for "neutrality." Such naiveté is apparent, not infrequently, in these analyses, though no more so than in most professional ~~work~~ work. Nevertheless, no reader will fail to learn a good deal about the U.S. involvement, and the attitudes and goals that underlie it, from a careful reading of the analyses and the documentation on which they are based.

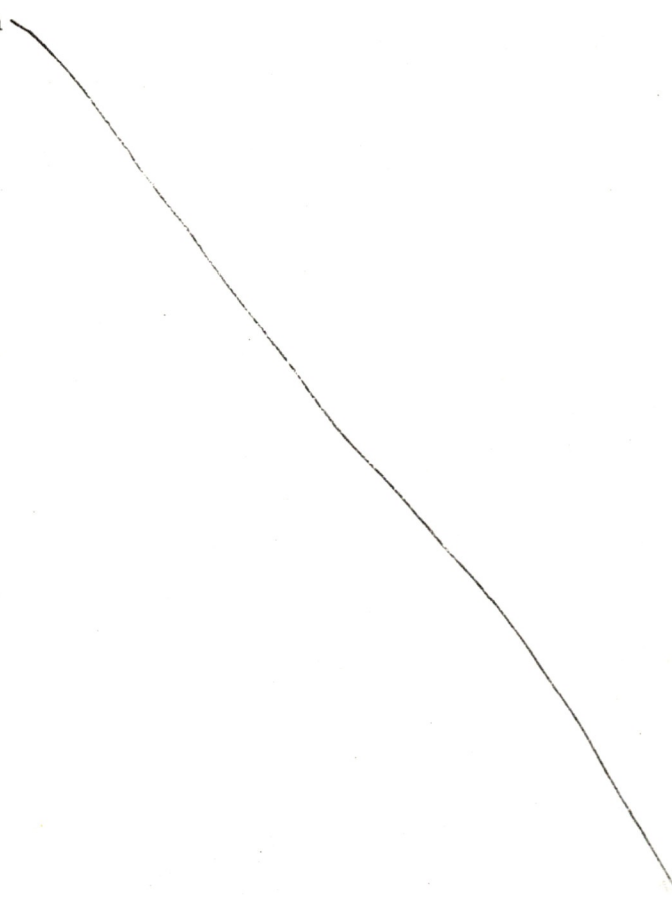
To cite a small example, it was not generally known that North Vietnamese villages were ^{apparently} bombed and strafed by T-28s on the eve of the Tonkin Gulf incident in August 1964, or that Thai pilots under direct U.S. command were shot down over the DRV two weeks later, though the Pathet Lao had provided evidence, generally disregarded in the West, that Thai pilots were taking part in the bombing of Laos. Given the timing, the facts are of some interest.

Consider a more important example: the escalation of the war in Laos in 1964. It is claimed by U.S. officials that the American involvement in an expanding war in Laos in 1964 was in response to North Vietnamese aggression. Evidence to support this interpretation of events is slim, but it is a fact that North Vietnamese soldiers entered Laos in February

1964. A report of the ICC "notes with interest" that the complaint of October 1954 from the Royal Lao Government is the first since the reconvening of the Commission in 1961 reporting the capture of prisoners "alleged to have been North Vietnamese." A few days prior to the RLG complaint of October, the Pathet Lao had notified the ICC that U.S. aircraft had attacked Laotian territory and parachuted South Vietnamese soldiers into Laos. Apart from the fact that three soldiers were reported captured (two identified by name), the Pathet Lao charge is plausible, given that three years earlier (October 1961) President Kennedy had directed that the U.S. "initiate guerrilla ground action, including the use of U.S. advisers if necessary," in Southern Laos, seven months after he had instructed that "we make every possible effort to launch guerrilla operations in Viet-Minh territory at the earliest possible time" (III, 140). In May 1961, an interdepartmental task force proposed extensive covert ~~xxx~~ operations in Southern Laos, approved by the President (II, 641-2; III, 140¹⁴²); see also note 145a). These operations were ~~perhaps~~ ^{perhaps} called off after the Geneva agreements of 1962, though the U.S. continued to supply guerrillas operating behind Pathet Lao lines and by mid-1963 ~~xxxx~~ had reportedly begun to reintroduce CIA military advisers. In ~~a~~ mid-November 1963 the CIA reported "first results just coming in" from a new series of cross-border operations into Laos (III, 141).

The ICC investigation confirmed the charge concerning the North Vietnamese soldiers, who entered Laos in February. The most convincing evidence of direct North Vietnamese involvement presented by Langer and Zasloff is the testimony of a North Vietnamese defector, who had been a Pathet Lao battalion adviser. ¹⁴³ He was given a month's leave in late January 1964 before undertaking a new (unspecified) assignment, but was ^{suddenly} notified on February 5th to report to Headquarters to accept an assignment, as he then learned, as a military adviser to the 408th Pathet Lao Battalion, which operated along the borders of China. He entered Laos some time after February 18, from China. ~~He~~ reports having met an NVA Battalion in North Vietnam near the Chinese border on February 12, also headed for Laos.

Why should the DRV have infiltrated advisers (and possibly troops) into Northern Laos in February 1964? The Pentagon Papers suggest a possible answer. In late 1963 plans were laid for a significant escalation of the war, and on February 1, the covert operations of the US-GVN in Laos and North Vietnam were stepped up considerably and placed under direct American command in Saigon. It is not unlikely that the plans were known to the North Vietnamese even before, given the generally porous character of the Saigon Administration and military. The purpose of this much expanded program of sabotage, kidnapping, commando raids and psychological warfare was to indicate to the DRV the depth of American commitment to the achievement of its war aims, specifically, surrender of the Pathet Lao and the NLF and the establishment of non-Communist governments in Laos and South Vietnam. Basing himself on material obtained prior to the publication of the Pentagon Papers, Anthony Austin states correctly that February 1, 1964, must "go down as one of the key dates of the American involvement." These covert operations, involving Vietnamese and foreign



mercenaries (Chinese nationalists, European adventurers, and possibly some Thais),¹⁴⁴ had "the primary motive ... to convey a message to Hanoi: 'We are changing the rules. You no longer have a sanctuary. The war is entering a new phase.'" ¹⁴⁵ The official purpose of these ^{and related} operations was to "warn and harass North Vietnam and to reduce enemy capabilities to utilize the Lao Panhandle for reinforcing the Viet Cong in South Vietnam and to cope with PL/VM pressures in Laos" (III, 606).

The covert program initiated on February 1 was ^{"spawned"} in May of 1963, ^{145a} approved by the Joint Chiefs on September 9, and finally approved by the President on January 16. This "elaborate program of covert military operations against the state of North Vietnam" ^(III, 149) was a significant expansion of CIA efforts from 1961 to organize resistance and sabotage in North Vietnam. It was ~~very~~ very different in scale and concept from earlier programs. "A firebreak had been crossed" (III, 106). ^{Quite possibly,} ~~the~~ the DRV received the "signal" that was so deliberately sent, and appreciated that "by early February 1964, the United States had committed itself to a policy of attempting to improve the situations in South Vietnam and Laos by subjecting North Vietnam to increasing levels of direct pressure" (III, ~~144~~ 152). The DRV perhaps concluded, reasonably enough, that Laos might be used as a base for an attack on North Vietnam -- as indeed proved to be the case, shortly after, with the establishment of radar posts to guide American bombers near the Laos-DRV border. ^{145b} North Vietnamese spokesmen have stated exactly this; for an example, see At War with Asia, p. 233, presented there without comment, though I would now be inclined to say that the remark is quite credible. ~~They~~ They may then have decided to respond to the threat by protecting their Western borders. ¹⁴⁶

^{interesting and suggestive.} All of this is ~~very~~ The U.S. Executive has justified its clandestine operations in Laos on grounds of alleged North Vietnamese aggression. The case has never been strong. The information released in the Pentagon study weakens it still further.

^{It was immediately obvious} ~~that~~ that the Pentagon Papers presented decisive evidence of U.S.-initiated escalation in late 1963 and early 1964, leading directly

to the expanded war in later years. Immediately upon the publication of the Pentagon Papers, the U.S. Mission in Vietnam released the text of a "captured North Vietnamese political directive" of December 1963¹⁴⁷ which, the Mission claims, "was the formal authorization for increasing North Viet-Nam's military presence in the South in 1964 and the years which followed." According to the Mission, the period after Diem's fall "seemed to Hanoi an opportune time to attempt the military conquest of the South," and this Resolution of the Central Committee of the Lao Dong Party, Dec. 1963, presents "the decision which raised the civil war in South Viet-Nam, where both ~~the~~ government and ~~the~~ insurgents had been receiving external assistance, to the level of an international conflict" -- a decision "made in Hanoi in December, 1963." The timing suggests that the ~~the~~ release of the document was an ~~effort~~ effort to counter the evidence presented in the Pentagon Papers that the decision to escalate was made in Washington, but the document is (assuming its authenticity) no less interesting for that reason. 147

According to a report by Arthur Dommen, this document discloses that "The Hanoi government had decided upon escalation of the war in South Vietnam more than a year before the Johnson Administration committed combat troops to the conflict."¹⁴⁸ The document reveals, he claims, that shortly after Diem's overthrow Hanoi "decided ...

on a step-up of the fighting in South Vietnam, using their own army if necessary." This appears to constitute the most authoritative proof from the hand of Hanoi's leaders themselves that they were planning a big war in South Vietnam long before American forces began to take an active part in the conflict," and had it been known to U.S. intelligence, it could have been used by the Administration in 1964 to explain U.S. involvement as a response to North Vietnamese aggression. Dommen gives a few quotes from the document, which, substantiate his assertions. however, do not ~~substantiate his assertions.~~

The document itself says nothing about a decision to use North Vietnamese troops in the South or even about covert North Vietnamese operations in the South (analogous, say, to those that the CIA had been conducting for many years in the

North and that were shapply escalated on February 1, 1964). It speaks of the "struggle of the South Vietnamese people against the U.S. for national independence," which is at the same ~~time~~ time a class struggle waged by SVN workers and peasants against "feudalist landowners" and "pro-U.S. bourgeois compradors." The document discusses the "successes of our Southern compatriots" and the ~~the~~ "achievements of the South Vietnamese people" who now "show themselves capable of beating the enemy in any situation." "The South Vietnamese people is one half of the heroic people" of Vietnam; they wage a revolutionary war, exploiting their political and moral strength to combat the material and military superiority of the enemy. "The war waged by the people in South VN is a protracted one because we are a small people having to fight an imperialist ringleader which is the U.S.A." "The general guideline for our people's revolutionary war in SVN is to conduct a protracted war, relying mainly on our own forces..."; "...the revolutionary people in SVN must promote a spirit of self-reliance." With a proper "emphasis on self-reliance and coordination between political struggle and armed struggle...the SVN people...have achieved many great victories." But "the people in the South must ~~not~~ not only have a big and strong political force but a big and strong military force as well." Therefore, concerted political and military efforts must be made in the mountainous, rural, and urban areas, "to motivate the people and ethnic-minority groups...to participate in our political struggle," to wage protracted war, to prepare for a General Uprising. "The South Vietnamese people's war" will succeed, and the Party "will lead the South Vietnamese Revolution to final victory."

There is further discussion of the military and political tactics that "the South Vietnamese people must adopt": annihilation tactics, helping the people, increasing production, mobilizing military forces, protecting the material and cultural life of the people, heightening the sense of self-reliance, developing democracy and trusting the masses. "Revolution is a creative achievement of the masses"; "To win or to lose the war depends on many factors, but the basic one is

man." "We must develop democracy to promote the subjective activism" of the people. "We should bring democracy into full play in political and armed struggles," and learn from the experiences of the people, eliminating "commandism," "detachment from the masses," etc.

The "SVN Revolutionary Armed Forces" must be constructed in accordance with the same "fundamental principles...applied for the building up ^[of] the Vietnamese People's Army," ~~with~~ with main force, local force, and militia guerrilla force "under the absolute leadership of the Party." "This army is not only a combat army, but also an action and production army," as is necessary in a struggle in which the political and social component is central. The "all-people, all-sided war" must be expanded "Even if the U.S. imperialists bring fifty to a hundred thousand additional troops to SVN."

After 39 pages in this vein, there is a two page statement of "The Mission of North Vietnam" ~~which is a two page statement of 'The Mission of North Vietnam' and the role of the Party and people in the North Vietnam.~~ ~~maintaining the Party and people in the North Vietnam.~~ North Vietnam." It begins as follows:

"To fulfill the above-mentioned mission, not only the Party and people in the South must make outstanding efforts but the Party and people in the North must make outstanding efforts as well. The role of the two 'mien' [parts: North and South VN] in the revolutionary undertaking of the country, as defined by the Party's third National Congress [Sept. 1960], is unchanged, however it is time for the North to increase aid to the South, the North must bring into fuller play its role as the revolutionary base for the whole nation."

"We should plan to aid the South to meet the requirements of the Revolution," to encourage our people in the North to work harder to "increase our economic and defensive strength in North Viet-Nam" and "to be ready to fulfill their obligation toward the southern Revolution under any form and in any circumstance" (for example, say, if the outright U.S. invasion with 50-100,000 troops takes place). The Party must

"direct the revolution in the South"; "we must coordinate with concerned branches of service in the North in order to better serve the revolution in the South." Following the anti-French war, "the revolutionary struggle of our Southern compatriots has been going on for almost the last ten years...the entire Party, the entire people from North to South must have full determination and make outstanding efforts to bring success to the revolution of our Southern compatriots and achieve peace and unification of the country, to win total victory, to build a peaceful, unified, independent, democratic, prosperous and strong Viet-Nam."

In short, the document states that the people of North Vietnam must be prepared to aid the popular revolutionary struggle being conducted, in a spirit of self-reliance, by their Southern compatriots, the other half of the Vietnamese people. One need not turn to captured documents to read such exhortations. English language publications from Hanoi commonly refer to "the great support of the Northern people for the struggle against US aggression of the Southern kith and kin." The English text of the Third Congress (1960) Resolution published in Hanoi speaks of the two tasks of the Vietnamese Revolution: "to carry out the socialist revolution in the North" and "to liberate the South from the rule of the American imperialists and their henchmen, achieve national reunification and complete ~~independence~~ independence and freedom throughout the country." See also the public statement of General Giap in January 1960 cited above (p. XX). The U.S. government White Paper of 1965 cites many other public statements of the same sort in its rather pathetic effort to demonstrate North Vietnamese aggression. In later years, there is frequent reference to the 1967 statement of Ho Chi Minh that

"Viet Nam is one, the Vietnamese people are one, and no one can encroach upon this sacred right of our people ... [to] ... independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Viet Nam."¹⁴⁹ The captured document released by the U.S. Mission is also typical in its reference to the struggle conducted by the South Vietnamese people in a spirit of self-reliance, with aid from the North, and with the goal of eventual reunification (cf. the Constitution of the GVN, cited above, p.); and in its emphasis on the central importance of the political and social struggle, which of course can only be conducted by indigenous forces, in the face of the military superiority of the U.S. and the ~~forces~~ ^{Vietnamese armed} forces it has established.

One must assume that the U.S. Mission has done its best to support the conclusion it announced in the introduction to this document, a conclusion duly repeated by a sympathetic reporter, but not founded on the actual text. If so, the case that the U.S. is unilaterally responsible for escalation of the war in 1964 seems to be demonstrated beyond serious question. Incidentally, if the war in the South was a "civil war" prior to this point, as the U.S. Mission states, then the direct engagement of U.S. ~~armed forces~~ ^{military forces in combat} from 1961, and the CIA-Special Forces covert operations throughout Indochina, were surely in violation of the U.N. Charter, which grants an outside power no right to engage in combat in a civil war. ^{See section III.} ~~See section III.~~

It has repeatedly been argued that the interpretation of the Indochina war is biased against the U.S. because we have no access to internal DRV documents. The statement is at best misleading. In fact, ^{the} ~~U.S.~~ ^{government has} ~~been~~ been selectively releasing "captured documents"¹⁵⁰ for years on a significant scale in an effort to buttress ~~its~~ ^{its} case, ~~whereas~~ ^{whereas} internal U.S. documents, prior to the publication of the Pentagon Study, have been available only when leaked by the U.S. executive or in memoirs of its former members. The DRV and the NLF, of course, do not capture and selectively release U.S. government documents. Therefore it would be more

accurate to state that in the past, internal documents have, for the most part, been selected by the U.S. executive for public release, for its own purposes, from both U.S. and Vietnamese sources, ~~_____~~. Nevertheless, the record both prior to and with the publication of the Pentagon Study would seem to leave little doubt as to who is responsible for the successive stages of escalation, quite apart from the respective rights of the U.S. government and contending Vietnamese to carry out military and political actions in Vietnam.

In the same connection, the Pentagon Papers add valuable documentation with regard to the commitment of North Vietnamese troops to South Vietnam. Over the past few years there has been a running debate about this matter. The documentary record previously available had indicated that regular North Vietnamese units were first identified ~~_____~~ in April 1965.¹⁵¹ However, some pro-government spokesmen have repeatedly claimed in public discussion that the U.S. government knew that regular units of the North Vietnamese army (NVA, PAVN) were operating in the South even before the November election of 1964, but chose not to reveal this fact for domestic political reasons. (Why the Pentagon should have maintained this deception through 1965 and 1966 remains a mystery, under this theory.) Joseph Alsop asserts (with no cited evidence) that "In 1965, when President Johnson intervened on the ground, Hanoi had two North Vietnamese divisions 'in country' -- that is, 'on the order of 28,000 of Hanoi's troops."¹⁵² The date of U.S. ground intervention would be sometime between Feb. 26, ~~_____~~ combat) (March 8 "was the first time that U.S. ground combat units had then the deployment of Marines was approved, ~~_____~~ been committed to action") ~~_____~~, and June 27, when U.S. forces took part in their first search and destroy operation into Viet Cong base areas (III, 390, 461). ~~_____~~ (447)

The published documents reveal ~~_____~~ what Washington believed to be the case during this period. The first reference to regular North Vietnamese units is in a CIA-DIA memorandum of April 21, 1965 which "reflected the acceptance into the enemy order of battle of one regiment of the 325th PAVN Division said to be located in [Northwestern] Kontum province."¹⁵³ Of the various signs of deterioration noted, this was the "most ominous," "a sobering harbinger of things to come." Westmoreland, on June 7, informed CINCPAC that "Some PAVN forces have entered SVN" (III, 438), and

on June 13, reported that the PAVN 325th Division "may be deployed" in Kontum, Pleiku and Phu Bon" (IV, 607), An NVA regiment "reportedly" overran a district headquarters in Kontum Province on June 25 (II, 473⁴; the earliest such report in this particular record).

Apparently, these reports were not too persuasive. On July 2, 1965, ⁱⁿ a memorandum to General Goodpaster, McNaughton states:

~~_____~~ "I am quite concerned about the increasing probability that there are regular PAVN forces either in the II Corps area [the area of the previous reports] or in Laos directly across the border from II Corps" (IV, 291, 277).

On the 14th of July, the Joint Chiefs included one regiment of the 325th PAVN Division in their estimate of 48,500 "Viet Cong organized combat units" (IV, 295). An intelligence estimate (SNIE) of July 23 predicted that if the U.S. increased its strength in SVN to 175,000 by November 1, then in order to offset this increase, the Communists would probably introduce a PAVN force totalling 20,000 to 30,000 ^{by the end of 1965 (III, 484-60; (this, the analyst adds, "they were already in the process of doing")} The absence of any considerable number of PAVN troops was reflected in the "Concept for Vietnam" presented on August 27, which specified as the major military tasks: "To cause the DRV to cease its direction and support of the Viet Cong insurgency," while defeating the Viet Cong and deterring Communist China (IV, 300). See also p. XX.

For comparison, note that on April 21, 1965, McNamara reported that 33,500 U.S. troops were already in-country, in addition to 2000 Koreans who had been dispatched on January 8, 1965 (III, 706; III, 139). He reported the unanimous recommendation of the Honolulu meeting of April 20 that U.S. forces be raised to 82,000 supplemented with 7250 Korean and Australian troops. The analyst concludes that by the time of the Honolulu meeting, "we were inexorably committed to a military resolution of the insurgency" since "The problem seemed no longer soluble by any other means"

(III, 105) -- the day before the "ominous" CIA-DIA report. By June, the U.S. decided "to pour U.S. troops into the country as fast as they could be deployed" (II, 362). On July 1, the day before McNaughton expressed his concern over the possibility that PAVN forces might intervene, planned U.S. deployments were 85,000 troops (III, 473). In mid-July, when the JCS ^{were} ~~was~~ estimating one PAVN regiment in South Vietnam, ^{the President approved the request} ~~that the U.S. troop level be raised to 175,000 in 1965,~~ with estimated U.S. killed-in-action of 500 per month, and another 100,000 ^(recommended for III, 396, 416; IV, 297, 299) ~~in 1966~~. Recall that April 1965 was two months after the initiation of regular and intensive bombing of North and South Vietnam, eight months after the bombing of strategic targets in North Vietnam in "retaliation" for the Tonkin incident, and 14 months after the escalation of military pressure against the North on Feb. 1, 1964.¹⁵⁴ Recall also that the U.S. troop level reached 23,000 by the end of 1964 (II, 160), and that ^{the} U.S. military ~~had~~ ^{operations} been directly engaged in combat ^{for three years, at that point.}

The record is clear, then, that when the U.S. undertook the February escalation, it knew of no regular North Vietnamese ^{units} ~~in~~ in South Vietnam, and that five months later, while implementing the plan to deploy 85,000 troops, ¹⁵⁵ the Pentagon was still speculating about the possibility that there might be ~~PAVN~~ PAVN forces in or near South Vietnam. In the light of these facts, the discussion of whether the U.S. was defending South Vietnam from an "armed attack" from the North ^{is} ~~is~~ ludicrous.

The most striking feature of the historical record, as presented in the Pentagon Study, is its remarkable continuity. I have noted several examples already, but perhaps the most significant has to do with the political premises of the four Administrations covered in the record. Never was there the slightest deviation from the principle that a non-Communist regime must be imposed, regardless of popular

sentiment. True, the scope of the principle was narrowed when it was finally conceded, by about 1960, that North Vietnam was "lost." Apart from that, the principle was maintained without equivocation. Given this principle, the strength of the Vietnamese resistance, the military power available to the United States, and the lack of effective constraints, one can deduce, with almost mathematical precision, the strategy of annihilation that was gradually undertaken.

In May 1949, Acheson informed U.S. officials in Saigon and Paris that "no effort should be spared" to assure the success of the Bao Dai government (which, he added, would be recognized by the U.S. when circumstances permit) since there appeared to be "no other alternative to estab[lishment] Commie pattern Vietnam." He further urged that the Bao Dai government should be "truly representative even to extent including outstanding non-Commie leaders now supporting Ho."¹⁵⁶ Of course Acheson was aware that Ho ^{Chi Minh} had "captured control of the nationalist movement;" ~~that~~ that he was "the strongest and perhaps the ablest figure in Indochina and that any suggested solution which excludes him is an expedient of uncertain outcome."¹⁵⁷ But to Acheson, Ho's popularity was of no ^{greater} ~~moment~~ moment than his nationalist credentials (see p.).

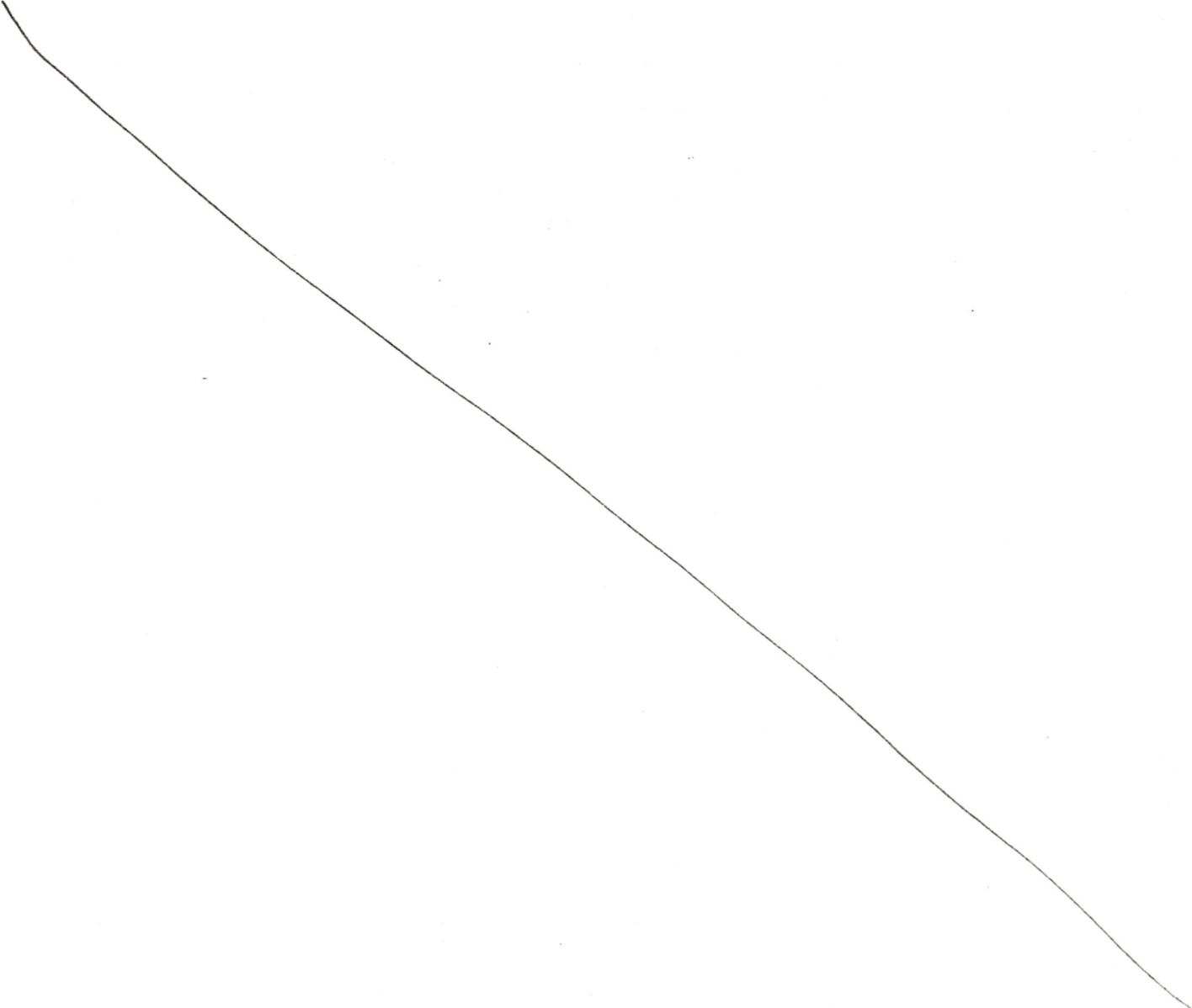
In May 1967, McNaughton and McNamara presented a memorandum that the analyst takes to imply a significant reorientation of policy, away from the early emphasis on military victory and towards a more limited and conciliatory posture. McNaughton suggested that the U.S. emphasize "that the sole U.S. objective in Vietnam has been and is to permit the people of South Vietnam to determine their own future." Accordingly, the Saigon government should be encouraged "to reach an accommodation with the non-Communist South Vietnamese who are under the VC banner; to accept them as members of an opposition political party, and, if necessary, to accept their individual participation in the national government."¹⁵⁸ Precisely Acheson's proposal of 18 years earlier (restricted, now, to South Vietnam).

The final words of the Pentagon Papers analysis describe a new policy, undertaken after the Tet offensive of 1968 had shattered the old: "American forces would remain in South Vietnam to prevent defeat of the Government by Communist forces and to provide a shield behind which that Government could rally, become effective, and win the support of its people" (IV, 604). Again, the same assumption: the U.S. must provide the military force to enable a non-Communist regime, despite its political weakness, corruption, and injustice, somehow to manage to stabilize itself. Nowhere is there the slightest deviation from this fundamental commitment.¹⁵⁹ The same policy remains in force today, despite tactical modifications.¹⁶⁰

Small wonder, then, that many Vietnamese saw the U.S. as the inheritors of French colonialism. The analyst cites studies of peasant attitudes demonstrating "that for many, the struggle which began in 1945 against colonialism continued uninterrupted throughout Diem's regime: in 1954, the foes of nationalists were transformed from France and Bao Dai, to Diem and the U.S..... but the issues at stake never changed" (I, 295; see also, I, 252). Correspondingly, the Pentagon considered its problem to be to "deter the Viet Cong (formerly called Viet Minh)" (May 1959; DOD, ^{also II, 409.} ~~book 10, 1180~~; Diem himself, on occasion, seems to have taken a rather similar position. Speaking to the departing French troops on April 28, 1956, he pledged that "your forces, who have fought to defend honor and freedom, will find in us worthy successors."¹⁶¹ General Minh (warned in Jan. 1964) ~~of the~~ "colonial flavor to the whole pacification effort." The French, ^{he said,} in their "worst and clumsiest days" ^{about to do. Note the date.} never went into villages or districts as the Americans were. ~~In response to Lodge's argument that most of the teams were Vietnamese, General Minh pointed out that "they are considered the same as Vietnamese who worked for the Japanese."~~ ^{The} U.S. reaction was to reject Minh's proposals as "an unacceptable rearward step" and to extend the advisor system even below "sector and battalion level" (II, 307-8). A year and a half later, it was quite appropriate

for William Bundy to wonder whether people in the countryside, who already may be tempted to regard the Americans as the successors to the French, might not "flock to the VC banner" after the full-scale U.S. invasion then being planned (IV, 611).

The Thieu regime today has a power base remarkably like Diem's, perhaps even narrower.¹⁶² By now, substantial segments of the urban intelligentsia -- "the people who count," as Lodge put it ^(II, 738) -- regard U.S. intervention as blatant imperialism. Of course, one may argue that the popular mood counts for less than in former years, now that the U.S. has succeeded, partially at least, in "grinding ~~down~~ the enemy ^{down by} ~~sheer~~ sheer weight and mass" ~~sheer~~ (Robert Komer; IV, 420).



VI

With regard to long-term U.S. objectives, the Pentagon Papers again add useful documentation, generally corroborating, I believe, analyses based on the public record that have been presented elsewhere.¹⁶³ In the early period, the documentary record presents a fairly explicit account of more or less rational pursuit of perceived self-interest. The United States has strategic and economic interests in Southeast Asia that must be secured. Holding Indochina is essential to securing these interests. Therefore we must hold Indochina. A critical consideration is Japan, which will eventually accommodate to the "Soviet Bloc" if Southeast Asia is lost. In effect, then, the United States would have lost the Pacific phase of World War II, which was fought, in part, to prevent Japan from constructing a closed "co-prosperity" sphere in Asia from which the U.S. would be excluded. The theoretical framework for these considerations was the domino theory, which was formulated clearly before the Korean war, as was the decision to support French colonialism. The goal: a new "co-prosperity sphere" congenial to U.S. interests and incorporating Japan.

It is fashionable today to deride the domino theory, but in fact it contains an important kernel of plausibility, perhaps truth. National independence and revolutionary social change, if successful, may very well be contagious. The problem is what Walt Rostow and others sometimes call the "ideological threat," specifically, "the possibility that the Chinese Communists can prove to Asians by progress in China that Communist methods are better and faster than democratic methods."¹⁶⁴ The State Department feared that "A fundamental source of danger we face in the Far East derives from Communist China's rate of economic growth which will probably continue to outstrip that of free Asian countries, with the possible exception of Japan,"

a matter of real as well as psychological impact elsewhere (DOD,
book 10, 1198; June, 1959). The Joint Chiefs repeated the same wording two
weeks later (1213), adding further that "The dramatic economic improvements
realized by Communist China over the past ten years impress the nations of
the region greatly and offer a serious challenge to the Free World" (1226).
State therefore urged that the U.S. do what it can to retard the economic
progress of the Communist Asian States (1208),¹⁶⁵ a decision that is remarkable

P in its cruelty. P A few years later, in the midst of the fall 1964 planning to
escalate the war, Michael Forrestal pointed out that we must be concerned with
Chinese "ideological expansion," its need "to achieve ideological successes
abroad," and the danger that any such ideological success will stimulate the
need for further successes. Therefore "our objective should be to 'contain'
China for the longest possible period" (III, 592, November 4, 1964); or, as
the analyst puts it a bit more accurately, paraphrasing Forrestal, "the U.S.
object should be to 'contain' Chinese political and ideological influence"
(III, 218). William Sullivan picked up the same theme, viewing "Chinese
political and ideological aggressiveness...as a threat to the ability of
these peoples to determine their own futures, and hence to develop along ways
compatible with U.S. interests" (ibid., analyst's paraphrase). P N Note the typical

cal assumption that self-determination is equivalent to U.S. interest, an
assumption that is more than usually insipid in the light of what the Pentagon
Papers reveal about the actual U.S. response to Vietnamese efforts at self-

~~determination). Recall that in this period there was much talk of a compe-~~
~~sition between the Chinese and Indian models of development. In this context,~~
~~fear of Chinese "ideological expansion" gave substance to the domino theory,~~
~~quite apart from any fantasies about Chinese aggression or Kremlin-directed~~
~~conspiracies.~~

determination. The same assumption, in effect, appeared much earlier in ^{the} ~~an~~ important State Department Policy Statement of September 1948, ^{discussed earlier,} which took note of "our inability to suggest any practicable solution of the Indochina problem." This inability arose from the incompatibility of our long-term objectives with certain unpleasant facts. One long-term objective is to eliminate so far as possible Communist influence and to prevent Chinese influence, and "the unpleasant fact [is] that Communist Ho Chi Minh is the strongest and perhaps the ablest figure in INdochina and that any suggested solution which excludes him is an expedient of uncertain outcome." What is particularly interesting is the reason why we must "prevent undue Chinese penetration and subsequent influence in Indochina." The reason is "so that the peoples of Indochina will not be hampered in their natural developments by the pressure of an alien people and alien interests."

This laudable concern for the "natural developments" of the people of Indochina, free from alien interests, is coupled with the statement of another long-term objective of U.S. ~~policy~~ policy: "to see installed a self-governing nationalist state which will be friendly to the US and which...will be patterned upon our conception of a democratic state," and will be associated ^{with} "with the western powers, particularly with France ~~who~~ whose customs, language and laws [the peoples of Indochina] are familiar, to the end that those peoples will prefer freely to cooperate with the western powers culturally, economically and politically" and will "work productively and thus contribute to a better balanced world economy," while enjoying a rising standard of income. ^{165a} The U.S. and France, in short, do not constitute "alien people and alien interests," so far as the peoples of Indochina are concerned, and association with them does not hamper "natural developments."

The NSC Working Group of November 1964, in discussing the domino theory, pointed out the danger that mainland Southeast Asia might fall to Communist domination if South Vietnam does, noting that "If either Thailand or Malaysia

were lost, or went badly sour in any way, then the rot would be in real danger of spreading all over mainland Southeast Asia" (III, 627). Shortly after, William Bundy and McNaughton noted that if a "Vietnamese-negotiated deal" ~~was~~ led to a

~~unified Communist Vietnam, hostile to Communist China and limiting its ambitions to Laos and Cambodia (the "most likely result" of the least aggressive option they were considering), then "whether the rot spread to Thailand would be hard to judge". It would, however, be "likely that the Thai...would accommodate somehow to Communist China even without any marked military move by Communist China" (III, 661). The "rot" in these cases is, surely, the "ideological threat." Recall that in this period there was much talk of a competition between the Chinese and Indian models of development. In this context, fear of Chinese "ideological expansion" gave substance to the domino theory, quite apart from any fantasies about Chinese aggression by the Viet Minh.~~
 (troops roaming at will through northern Thailand (see note 47))
 (see note 164))
 or Kremlin-directed

It is important to be clear about what is at stake in discussion of the domino theory and related matters. The reality of perceived "dangers" is, of course, irrelevant to determining the motivation of policy makers. The fact that threats were perceived and taken seriously suffices to establish a motive. The question of the reality of the threats is nevertheless of interest, for a different reason. If in fact a failure of intelligence or knowledge led to the perception of imaginary dangers, as is often alleged, then policy could be "improved" (for whose benefit, is another question) by replacing the policy makers by others who are more rational ~~men~~ and knowledgeable. The issues are ~~not~~ sometimes not kept separate, with much resulting confusion.

In Southeast Asia, the threat was heightened by a look at the allies of the United States.

~~the threat of Chinese "ideological expansion" gave substance to the theory, quite apart from any fantasies about Chinese aggression or Kremlin-directed~~

~~U.S. officials~~
 When Lyndon Johnson returned from Vietnam in ^{May} 1961, he spoke of the problem of reassuring our friends: in addition to Diem, these were Chiang, Sarit, and Ayub (II, 56). Such friends as these -- the only ones mentioned -- surely ^{and others} were endangered by the "ideological threat" that Rostow perceived. The threat would be enhanced if Vietnam were to be united and successful in mobilization of the population for social and economic development, generally along Chinese lines, as might well have occurred, had U.S. force not been introduced.

The comparison of development in South and North Vietnam was not particularly encouraging to the U.S. in this regard. An Intelligence Estimate of May, 1959 concluded that "development will lag behind that in the North, and the GVN will continue to rely heavily upon ^{US} ~~UN~~ support to close the gap between its own resources and its requirements" (^{DoD} , book 10, 1191). In the North, the standard of living is low and "life is grim and regimented," but "the national effort is concentrated on building for the future." The South has a higher standard of living (and "there is far more freedom and gaiety" -- for whom, is not specified, nor is there discussion of the distribution of wealth), but "basic economic growth has been slower than that of the north." The higher standard of living in the South was not unrelated to the more than \$1 billion of U.S. non-military aid, the bulk of which financed import of commodities (^{DoD} , book 10, 1191-3). In a similar context a few years later, an NSC working group took note of the discouragement in South Korea "at the failure to make as much progress politically and economically as North Korea" (III, 627).

Perhaps the threat has now diminished, with the vast destruction in South Vietnam and the hatreds, and social disruption caused by the American

~~war.~~

It may be, then, that Vietnam can be lost to the Vietnamese without the dire ~~consequence~~ ^{social and} consequence of rapid ~~economic~~ economic progress. Perhaps the "second line of defense" of which U.S. planners ~~spoke~~ spoke can be held, at least for a time.

If our friends -- ^{Diem,} Chiang, Sarit, and Ayub, ⁱⁿ 1961 -- were toppled by popular movements, perhaps ultimately leading Japan to realign, influencing India, affecting even the oil-rich Middle East and then Europe, as the domino theory postulated, there would be a serious impact on the global system dominated by the United States and U.S.-based international corporations. Although some of the formulations of the domino theory were indeed fantastic, the underlying concept was no fantasy. Correspondingly, it comes as no surprise to discover that it is ^{rarely} ~~rarely~~ challenged in this record. The analyst regards support for the French against Ho Chi Minh as "the path of prudence rather than the path of risk"; it "seemed the wiser choice," given the likelihood that all of Southeast Asia might have fallen under Ho's leadership (obviously not ^{by} ~~by~~ military conquest, say, in Indonesia). This he regards as "only slightly less of a bad dream than what has happened to Vietnam since" (I, 52). The domino principle, he notes "was at the root of U.S. policy" since Chiang's defeat. It was also at the root of French policy, though the dominoes they were concerned with were in North Africa (I, 54). I have already noted McGeorge Bundy's firm reiteration of the theory in mid-1967 (IV, 159).

P-P In the years between, there is debate only over timing and probability. A CIA analysis of June, 1964 has frequently been described as a challenge to the validity of the domino theory. ¹⁶⁶ However, this analysis (III, 178) merely states that the surrounding nations probably would not "succumb quickly to communism as a result of the fall of Laos and South Vietnam" (my emphasis)

and the spread of communism would not be "inexorable" and might be reversed, though the loss of South Vietnam and Laos "would be profoundly damaging to the U.S. position in the Far East," and might encourage the "militant policies" of Hanoi and Peking.

The documentation for the pre-Kennedy period gives substantial support to this interpretation of U.S. motives. By April, 1945, the U.S. had publicly supported the reconstitution of French authority, somewhat evasively, though ~~a~~ a "more liberal" pattern, specifically, "liberalization of restrictive French economic policies" was recommended "for the protection of American interests" (DOD, ~~book 8, 6-10~~).

The U.S. interest in Indochina ("almost exclusively a French economic preserve, and a political morass") was considerably less than in Indonesia, where "extensive American and British investments...afforded common ground for intervention" (I, 29). It was urged that France move to grant autonomy to its colonies (or the people "may embrace ideologies contrary to our own or develop a Pan-Asiatic movement against all Western powers") and that open door policies be pursued (DOD, ~~book 8, 23~~). By December, 1946, it was noted that "French appear to realize no longer possible maintain closed door here and non-French interests will have chance to participate in unquestioned rich economic possibilities" (*ibid.*, 87). Although the resources of Indochina itself are repeatedly mentioned (e.g., *ibid.*, 183), it was of course the whole region (on the hypothesis of the domino theory) that was the primary consideration: "if COMMIES gain control IC, ~~SEA~~ ^{THAI} and rest SEA will be imperiled" (*ibid.*, 220; June, 1949).

A National Security Council report of December, 1949 went into the situation in some detail (NSC 48/1, *ibid.*, 226f.). The problem is that now and ^{foreseeable} for the future, the USSR threatens to dominate Asia, an area of significant political, economic, and military power. The "Stalinist bloc" might achieve

global dominance, if Japan, "the principal component of a Far Eastern war-making complex," were added to it. "Whether [Japan's] potential is developed and the way in which it is used will strongly influence the future patterns of ^{ti}politics in Asia." "In the power potential of Asia, Japan plays the most important part," by reason of its economic potential and strategic position. "The industrial plant of Japan would be the richest strategic prize in the Far East for the USSR." Communist pressure on Japan will mount, because of proximity, the indigenous Japanese Communist movement which might be able to exploit cultural ~~fraternal~~ factors and economic hardship, and "the potential of Communist China as a source of raw materials vital to Japan and a market for ^{it} goods." Japan requires Asian food, raw materials, and markets; the U.S. should encourage "a considerable increase in Southern Asiatic food and raw material exports" to avoid "preponderant dependence on Chinese ~~and~~ sources." Analogous considerations hold of India. Furthermore, these markets and sources of raw materials ~~in~~ should be developed for U.S. purposes. "Some kind of regional ~~association~~ association...among the non-Communist countries of Asia might become an important means of develop^{ing}ing a favorable atmosphere for such trade among themselves and with other parts of the world."

~~global dominance, if Japan, "the principal component of a Far Eastern war-
making complex," were added to it. The future of Japan ^{may} strongly influ-
ence ^{the} future patterns of politics in Asia." Communist pressure on Japan will
mount, because of proximity, and the potential of Communist China as a source
of raw materials vital to Japan and essential to its goals. ^{Indians}
Communist China might be able to exploit cultural and economic heretofore
reserved for the Far East. ^{Indians}
In Southeast Asia, food and raw materials are
needed. Chinese control of these resources
would be a major threat to the West.~~

IP

Under certain restrictions, trade with Communist China should be permitted, for the health of the Japanese and U.S. economies. The industrial plant of Japan and such strategic materials as Indonesian oil must be denied to the USSR, and kept in the Western orbit. The particular problem in Southeast Asia is that it "is the target of a coordinated offensive directed by the Kremlin" (this is "now clear"), and has no responsible leaders, outside of Thailand ¹⁶⁷ and the Philippines. If Southeast Asia "is swept by communism we shall have suffered a major political rout the repercussions of which will be felt throughout the rest of the world, especially in the Middle East and in a then critically exposed Australia."

The general lines of this analysis persist through the Truman and Eisenhower administrations. NSC/64 (I, 361^f) concluded that Thailand and Burma would "fall under Communist domination" and the rest of Southeast Asia would be "in grave hazard," if Indochina were "controlled by a Communist-dominated government." The Joint Chiefs urged "long-term measures to provide for Japan and the other offshore islands a secure source of food and other strategic materials from non-Communist held areas in the Far East" (I, 366, April, 1950; they also recommended military aid and covert operations). A

State Department Policy Committee interpreted NSC/64 as asserting that "the loss of Indochina to Communist forces would undoubtedly lead to the loss of Southeast Asia" (^{DOD} ~~book 8, 351; October, 1950~~). NSC 48/5 saw the USSR as attempting to bring the mainland of East Asia and eventually Japan under Soviet control (May, 1951; ibid., 425f.). Given Asian population, military capacity, critical resources and Japanese industrial capacity, it is essential to block this program. An NSC ^{staff} study of February, 1952 warned that

The fall of Southeast Asia would underline the apparent economic advantages to Japan of association with the communist-dominated Asian sphere. Exclusion of Japan from trade with Southeast Asia would seriously affect the Japanese economy, and increase Japan's dependence on United States aid. In the long run the loss of Southeast Asia, especially Malaya and Indonesia, could result in such economic and political pressures in Japan as to make it extremely difficult to prevent Japan's eventual accomodation to the Soviet Bloc. (I, 375).¹⁶⁸

It went on to speak of the importance of Southeast Asian raw materials (e.g., Indonesian oil, and the significance of Malaya, the largest dollar earner of the United Kingdom, to Britain's economic recovery), and U.S. strategic interests, developing the domino theory in detail.

NSC 124/2 in June, 1952 identified China as the main enemy, and gave a clear formulation of the domino theory, emphasizing again the problem of raw materials and the threat of Japanese accommodation to Communism (I, 83-4, 384^{f.)}). The same themes persist, with added and even clearer emphasis, under the Eisenhower Administration. It was emphasized that Japan is the keystone of U.S. policy and that the loss of Southeast Asia (a likely consequence of the loss of Indochina, or even Tonkin) would drive Japan to accommodation with the Communist bloc, permitting Red China (now the main culprit, though some analyses still refer to "the Soviet Communist campaign in Southeast Asia," ~~which~~; cf. ibid., book 9, 214; January, 1954) to construct a military

bloc more formidable than that of Japan before World War II. The worldwide effects would be disastrous. Therefore Indochina must be saved, and its countries must be encouraged to integrate themselves into the "free world" system and to stimulate the flow of raw material resources to the free world (e.g., I, 436, 438, 450, 452), Japan being the critical factor. In June 1956, John F. Kennedy gave a clear formulation of the basic ~~theme~~ thesis:

"Vietnam represents the cornerstone of the Free World in Southeast Asia, the Keystone to the arch, the finger in the dike. Burma, Thailand, India, Japan, the Philippines and, obviously, Laos and Cambodia are among those whose security would be threatened if the red tide of Communism ~~in~~ overflowed into Vietnam...Moreover, the independence of Free Vietnam is crucial to the free world in fields other than the military. Her economy is essential to the economy of all of Southeast Asia; and her political liberty is an inspiration to those seeking to obtain or maintain their liberty in all parts of Asia -- and indeed the world. The fundamental tenets of this nation's foreign policy, in short, depend in considerable measure upon a strong and free

~~Historical background~~

168a

Vietnamese nation."

vided both a challenge and an opportunity to test the new doctrines" of counterinsurgency.¹⁶⁹ It would appear, then, that whether the U.S. stance with respect to its great power rival is defensive or not, the determination to win in Indochina is fortified.

By early 1964, concern over the effects of the "loss" of South Vietnam reached a peak of what can perhaps properly be called "hysteria." In the analyst's phrase, referring to ^{the} February deliberations, "Stopping Hanoi from aiding the Viet Cong virtually became equated with protecting U.S. interests against the threat of insurgency throughout the world" (III, 153). Ralph Stavins ^{hardly} ~~exaggerates~~ ^{exaggerates} when he describes the ~~clouds~~ ^{as seen from Washington} on the horizon" in the early 1960s: "Hanoi would overthrow Diem with a few guerrilla bands, and the United States, as a ~~not~~ direct consequence, would be forced to retire from the arena of world politics."^{169a} ^{Such} ~~fears~~ ^{fears} were incorporated into the important NSAM 288 of March 1964, which presented what the analyst ~~calls~~ ^{calls} "a classic statement of the domino theory" (III, 3). ~~Throughout the world, it held, "the~~ ^{Throughout the world, it held, "the} South Vietnam conflict ~~is~~ ^{is} regarded as a test case of U.S. capacity to help a nation to meet the Communist 'war of liberation'. Thus, purely in terms of foreign policy, the stakes are high. The Memorandum stated in clear terms that "We seek an independent non-Communist South Vietnam" free to accept outside -- meaning, American -- assistance, including "police and military help to root out and control insurgent elements." And it stated that unless we can achieve this objective, "almost all of Southeast Asia will probably fall under Communist dominance" or "accommodate to Communism," with an increased threat ^{to} ~~to~~ India, ~~to~~ Australia, ~~to~~ Japan, and indeed, throughout the world, given that the conflict is a "test case." (III, 50-1; ^{II, 459-61).} Although these views were ~~considerably~~ ^{moderately} modulated later on (cf. III, 220, 658), the essential idea of South Vietnam as a "test case" remained, and the commitment to a non-Communist South Vietnam was never modified. ~~...~~

~~...challenges and opportunity to test the new doctrine of~~
~~...insurgency, ... would appear, then, that whether the U.S. stance~~
~~... to its great power rivalry is defensive or not, the determination~~
~~...~~

The problem of Japan continues to be a serious, though ^{much} less central issue. An important NSC working group in November, 1964, considering the problem of escalation, discussed "the effect on Japanese attitudes through any development that appears to make Communist China and its allies a dominant force in Asia that must be lived with." They already perceived a danger that Japan will move toward closer ties with Communist China, and "the growing feeling that Communist China must somehow be lived with might well be accentuated" if the U.S. were not to prevail in Indochina (III, 623, 627 ; William Bundy's draft). It is important, in short, that Japan not accommodate to China, that Japan not drift towards a readiness to live with China. Again in June, 1965, William Bundy warned of the importance of considering Japanese views in choosing policy, for fear that Japan may turn to "accommodation and really extensive relations ^(hips) with Communist China" (IV, 614). We know from other sources that in the 1950s Japan was pressured to break trade relations with ^{China,} ~~China,~~ and that access to Southeast Asia was explicitly offered as an inducement.¹⁷⁰ Japan's need for markets was also an important consideration for President Kennedy.¹⁷¹ It must, of course, be kept in mind that Japan in those years was not generally perceived as an immediate rival; in fact, until 1965 Japan always had an unfavorable trade balance with the United States.¹⁷² Japan was perceived as a potential threat, if it drifted from the U.S. global system and began to "live with" China.

Failure to appreciate the historical circumstances and the range of options actually available to policy-makers sometimes leads to superficial

commentary on this matter. For example, Charles Kindleberger argues that Japan is a "difficult counterexample" to the theory that United States economic foreign policy is motivated by self-interest,¹⁷³ ^(to the theory) specifically, that "foreign aid to less developed countries is to keep these countries ~~in~~ dependent" and that U.S. policies "are designed to use the dollar as a main instrument of control over the capitalist world." Putting aside the question whether the theory is defensible, consider the logic of Kindleberger's argument: why does he regard Japan as a "difficult counterexample"? His reason is that Japan has been assisted by the U.S. in various ways, but is not "a puppet of the United States." By the same logic, we can prove that Soviet aid to China and Rumania, for example, was not granted out of self-interest. In fact, ^{Kindleberger's} ~~the~~ argument holds only on the further implicit assumption that the United States is omnipotent: ^{on this assumption, if U.S.} ~~consequently, U.S.~~ aid is intended to induce some nation to remain within the American-dominated system, then that nation must be a puppet; and if the nation is not a puppet, it follows that U.S. assistance cannot have been intended as a device to maintain control or influence.

In the real world, however, U.S. policy-makers faced a rather different problem. They had a variety of means at hand to influence post-war Japanese development toward integration into the "free world" system. A likely alternative, which they successfully overcame, was that "the workshop of the Pacific" might undergo revolutionary social change or "accommodate" to the closed systems developing in East Asia, ^(cf., e.g., NSC 48, discussed above.) The option of guaranteeing that Japan would be "a puppet" was not available; whether it would have been chosen had it been feasible is another question.¹⁷⁴ ~~_____~~

The results are a mixed blessing to U.S. capital -- bad for textiles and a bonanza for oil interests, to mention two examples -- but surely preferable to the perceived alternatives. In any event, once Kindleberger's untenable implicit hypothesis is removed, the "difficult counterexample" becomes quite

manageable. Reasonable discussion of the matter is impeded by a kind of paranoia that is developing about "Japan, Inc." For example, Brzezinski predicts that Japan will seek to "exclude" computers from its liberalization policy on foreign investment, ~~failing to mention~~ (the fact that a wholly-owned subsidiary of IBM, IBM Japan, has an estimated 40% share of the Japanese computer market (apart from other arrangements, of various sorts, between U.S. and Japanese companies in the computer fields)¹⁷⁵). In fact, Japanese liberalization is proceeding, ~~and~~, and if the outcome of the competition between U.S. and Japanese capital may be in doubt, it should not be forgotten that quite apart from questions of scale, the U.S. holds many cards, for example, control of most of Japan's sources of petroleum.¹⁷⁶ In any event, prior to the full-scale U.S. invasion of South Vietnam, with its vast and unanticipated costs, it was ^{quite} reasonable to suppose that Japan would remain, for some time, a reasonably well-behaved junior partner in the American-dominated system.

Perhaps a word might be added with regard to the ^{commonly} ~~heard~~ argument that the costs of the Vietnam war prove that the U.S. has no imperial motives (as the costs of the Boer war prove that the British empire was a figment of the radical imagination). The costs, of course, are profits for selected segments of the American economy, in large measure. Nevertheless, it is quite true that the costs of empire to the imperial society may be considerable. They are, however, distributed over the population as a whole, while the profits flow back to special segments of the economy that are generally well-represented in the formation of state policy. To the extent that this is true, an empire functions as a device for internal ^{consolidation} ~~of~~ power and wealth,¹⁷⁷ ^{At the same time, it provides} ~~while providing~~ markets, sources of raw material, a cheap labor market, and investment opportunities. On the

assumptions of the domino theory, the stakes in Vietnam in this regard were considerable.

Still, it might very well be true that had the costs been anticipated, the Vietnam venture would not have been undertaken. But in the real world, planners do not operate with a knowledge of ultimate costs, and cannot begin all over again if policies fail. At each point, they consider the costs and benefits of future acts. On these grounds, the Vietnam involvement might very well have seemed ~~reasonable~~ ^{reasonable,} within the framework of imperialist motives, though by the 1960s, with the influx to Washington of ideologists and crisis-managers, it can be argued -- I think rather plausibly -- that other and more irrational considerations came to predominate.

Furthermore, even now that the bill is in, the effort might be judged a moderate success for those segments of American society that have a major interest in preserving an "integrated global system" in which American capital can operate with reasonable freedom. Consider the assessment of the editor of the Far Eastern Economic Review, generally committed to economic liberalism. He speaks of "the ring of success stories in East and Southeast Asia," with the Japanese economy serving as "the main factor in pulling the region together and providing the shadowy outlines of a future co-prosperity sphere...and neatly complementing" the economies of the rest of the region. "The U.S. presence in Vietnam," in his view, "has won time for Southeast Asia, allowing neighboring countries to build up their economies and their sense of identity to a degree of stability which has equipped them to counter subversion, to provide a more attractive alternative to the peasant than the promises of the terrorist who steals down from the hills or from the jungles at night" -- or on different ideological premises, allowing these countries to become more securely absorbed within the neocolonial global system. Whatever premises

one takes, the fact is that "American businessmen...are convinced of the potential of Asia and the Pacific Basin as the world's third largest and fastest growing market area," and are moving rapidly into the region, a process that is continuing "since the ^{initiation} ~~process~~ of 'Vietnamisation'." U.S. investments now total nearly 70% of all foreign investments in the region.¹⁷⁸

The imperial drive that is clearly expressed in many documents may have been blunted by the unexpected resilience and obstinacy of the Vietnamese resistance. It has, nevertheless, partially achieved its aims, though in retrospect it might be argued that other means would perhaps have been more efficacious. In general, however, it seems fair to say that the concerns of the 1950s were not unrealistic, and that the imperial policy to which they gave rise was also fairly rational, if cynical. But I emphasize again that to demonstrate the motive force of the imperial drive, it is necessary only to exhibit the concerns that guided it, not their realism.

To be sure, the imperial drive is ^{often} ~~generally~~ masked in defensive terms: it is not that we are seeking to dominate an integrated world system incorporating Japan, but rather that we must deny strategic areas to the Kremlin (or "Peiping"), thus protecting ourselves and others from their "aggression." The masters of the Russian empire affect a similar pose, no doubt with equal sincerity and with as much justification. The practice has respectable historical antecedents, and the term "security" is a conventional euphemism. The planners merely seek to guarantee the security of the nation, not the interests of dominant social classes.

There is, in fact, a sense in which the "defensive" rhetoric is appropriate. It is natural for the managers of the world's most advanced industrial superpower, organized more or less along capitalist lines, to seek free and open competition throughout the world in fair confidence that the interests

they represent will tend to predominate. Thus they seek only to deny various areas to closed systems, national or imperial. The United States, like Britain in the period of its world dominance, tends towards the "imperialism of free trade," while maintaining the practice of state intervention for the benefit of special interests and demanding special rights (as in the Philippines) where they can be obtained.¹⁷⁹

Many commentators deny that U.S. policy was determined, or even influenced by long-term imperial objectives, and argue that the Pentagon Papers reveal no imperial drive. A case can be made for this view, particularly in the 1960s. Leslie Gelb ~~_____~~ makes the interesting point that "no systematic or serious examination of Vietnam's importance ^(to the United States) was ever undertaken within the government."¹⁸⁰ He attributes the persistence of the Vietnam venture, in the face of this oversight, to multiple factors: the stranglehold of cold war assumptions, bureaucratic judgments, anti-Communism as a force in American politics and other domestic pressures, and so on.¹⁸¹ He points out that although the view that "Vietnam had intrinsic strategic military and economic importance" was argued, it never prevailed; properly, of course, since Vietnam has no such intrinsic importance. Rather its importance derives from the assumptions of the domino theory, in his formulation, the theory "by which the fall of Indochina would lead to the deterioration of American security around the globe." "It was ritualistic anti-communism and exaggerated power politics that got us into Vietnam," he maintains, noting that these "articles of faith" were never seriously debated (New York Review).

Hannah Arendt has ~~_____~~ discussed a variety of rather different irrational factors that impelled policy-makers in Vietnam.¹⁸² "The ultimate aim," she concludes, "was neither power nor profit...[nor]...particular tangible interests," but rather "image making," "something new in the huge arsenal of human follies."

"American policy pursued no real aims, good or bad, that could limit and control sheer fantasy," in particular, no imperial strategy. ~~Ignor-~~ ^{American} Ignorance, blind anti-communism, arrogance, self-deception lie behind ~~these~~ policies. She is certainly correct in noting these elements in the Pentagon history. Thus in the face of all historical evidence, the U.S. authorities persisted in the assumption, a point of rigid doctrine, that China was an agent of Moscow, the Viet Cong an agency of North Vietnam, which was in turn the puppet of Moscow or "Peiping" or both, all depending on the mood of the planners and propagandists, who, surely, had more than enough information at hand to refute, or at the very least to shake their confidence in these assumptions. A kind of institutionalized stupidity seems a possible explanation.

There is ample material in the Pentagon Papers to support such interpretations, from the time when Dean Acheson, in a cable to Saigon, spoke of the need to aid the French and the Associated States of Indochina "to defend the territorial integrity of IC and prevent the incorporation of the ASSOC[iated] States within the COMMIE-dominated bloc of slave states" (October, 1950; I, 70), and on to the present. One of the most remarkable revelations of the Pentagon Study is that the analysts were able to discover only one staff paper, in a record of more than two decades, "which treats communist reactions primarily in terms of the separate national interests of Hanoi, Moscow, and Peiping, rather than primarily in terms of an overall communist strategy for which Hanoi is acting as an agent" (II, 107; an intelligence estimate of November, 1961). Even in the "intelligence community," where they are paid to get the facts straight and not to rant about helping the French defend the territorial integrity of ^{Indochina} ~~Indochina~~ ^{its people} ~~its people~~ and the Commie-dominated bloc of slave states, it was apparently next to impossible to perceive, or at least express the simple truth that North Vietnam,

like the Soviet Union, China, the United States, and the NLF, has its own interests, which are often decisive.

It is amusing to trace the efforts to establish that Ho Chi Minh was merely a Russian (or Chinese) puppet -- as obviously must be the case. The State Department, in July, 1948, could find "no evidence of direct link between Ho and Moscow" (but naturally "assumes it exists").¹⁸³ State Department intelligence, in the fall, found evidence of "Kremlin-directed conspiracy...in virtually all countries except Vietnam." Indochina appeared "an anomaly." *How can this be explained? To intelligence, the most likely explanation is* that "no rigid directives have been issued ^{by} ~~the~~ Moscow" or that "a special dispensation for the Vietnam government has been arranged in Moscow" (I, 5,34). In September, 1948, the State Department noted that "There continues to be no known communication between the USSR and Vietnam, ^{at} though evidence is accumulating that a radio liaison may have been established through the Tass agency in Shanghai" (DOD, ~~book 8, 148~~, grasping at straws). American officials in Saigon added that "No evidence has yet turned up that Ho Chi Minh is receiving current directives either from Moscow, China, or the Soviet Legation in Bangkok." "It may be assumed," they conclude from this, "that Moscow feels that Ho and his lieutenants have had sufficient training and experience and are sufficiently loyal to be trusted to determine their day-to-day policy without supervision" (*ibid.*, 151). By February, 1949, they were relieved to discover that "Moscow publications of fairly recent date are frequently seized by the French," indicating that "satisfactory communications exist," though the channel remains a mystery (*ibid.*, 168; also "there has been surprising[ly] little direct cooperation between local Chinese Communists and the Viet Minh").

"We are unable to determine whether Peiping or Moscow has ultimate respon-

sibility for Viet Minh policy," an intelligence estimate of June, 1953 relates (I, 396), but it must be one or the other -- that is an axiom. ^{In the context of a discussion of Chinese Communist strategy} Intelligence concludes that the ~~Communists~~ ^(in Indochina) are pursuing their present strategy because "It diverts badly needed French and ~~USA~~ ^{US} resources from Europe at relatively small cost to the Communists" and "provides opportunities to advance international Communist interests while preserving the fiction of 'autonomous' national liberation movements, and it provides an instrument, the Viet Minh, with which Communist China and the USSR can indirectly exert military and psychological pressures on the peoples and governments of Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand" (I, 399). ^{Might} there be another reason why the Viet Minh fight on?

Occasionally, there is a ray of light. ^{As already noted (see p. XX),} ~~The~~ NSC Working Group in the fall of 1964 observed that the most likely result of the ^{least aggressive} ~~option~~ it was considering "would be a Vietnamese-negotiated deal, under which an eventually unified Communist Vietnam would reassert its traditional hostility to Communist China and limit its own ambitions to Laos and Cambodia" (III 229; A. III, 661). But such moments are rare.

183a

It is tempting to use such evidence to support the claim that ignorance, mythology, and institutionalized stupidity led U.S. policy-makers into a series of disastrous errors. If only they had realized that Stalin was lukewarm or negative towards Mao and the Greek guerrillas, that there was no "pattern of Communist conquest...manifest" in Guatemala in 1954, ^{that} the Vietnamese were conducting their own struggle for national liberation. If only William Bundy had had a course in Vietnamese history at Yale. But ignorance and paranoia obscured the facts.

This theory, however, leaves too many questions unanswered. To mention only the simplest: why were policy-makers always subject to the same form of ignorance and irrationality? Why was there such a systematic error in the delusional system constructed by post-war ideologists? Mere ignorance or foolishness would lead to random error, not to a regular and systematic dis-

tortion: unwavering adherence¹⁸⁴ to the principle that whatever the facts, may be, all revolutionary movements within the U.S. system are sponsored by the USSR, China, or both.¹⁸⁵ Why was this assumption so far beyond challenge that no examination of Vietnam's importance was ever undertaken (Gelb)? Ignorance and stupidity can surely lead to error, but hardly to such certainty in error. And there is a second and even more obvious question: why is the United States anti-communist?

With respect to the first question, whether it is Acheson, Rostow, Stevenson, Kissinger, or whoever, one generally finds the same distortion as in the sorry record of the "intelligence community". ~~From one or another~~
~~such source we hear that~~ (Stalin supported Mao and incited the Greek guerrillas and Ho Chi Minh; China invaded India; ~~the~~ Viet Cong are agents of international communist aggression; and so on. There are, indeed, articles of faith. The crisis-managers do not argue these claims; they merely intone them. All are at best ^{highly} dubious and probably false, so the available record indicates, but questions of fact are beside the point in theological disputation.

What is not beside the point is that these articles ^{of} faith are highly functional. The fact is that anti-communism provides a convenient mythology to justify colonial wars. But to explain the U.S. attack on Vietnam on grounds of anti-communist delusions would be as superficial as explaining the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia or Hungary merely on grounds of fear of West Germany or Wall Street. No doubt, at some level, the Soviet leadership believes what it says, and is bewildered at the bitter reaction to its selfless and benevolent behavior. Perhaps Russian public opinion "is proud of its country's armed power in Prague and speaks of Czechoslovak weakness, ingratitude, irresponsibility, etc."¹⁸⁶ Similarly, Washington claims to be

defending democracy and warding off "internal aggression" or subversion by agents of international communism when it helps to destroy a mass popular movement in Greece, supports an invasion of Guatemala, invades the Dominican Republic, and devastates the peasant societies of Indochina, inter alia. Its defenders, and many critics as well, are at most willing to concede error if plans go awry, and cannot conceive that any "responsible" or "qualified" observer might have a rather different view. Some still insist that the United States pursues its foreign policy for the most part "for reformist, even utopian goals," and that this policy can only be faulted for being "callow, sentimental, savagely stupid...too little the work of an intellectually serious leadership..."¹⁸⁷ It is remarkable how difficult it is, even for those who see themselves as critics, to interpret U.S. behavior by the standards of evaluation and analysis that would, properly, be applied to any other great power.

The fact that policy-makers may be caught up in the fantasies they spin to disguise imperial intervention, and sometimes may even find themselves trapped by them, should not prevent us from asking what function these ideological constructions fulfill -- why this particular system of mystification is consistently expounded, in place of some alternative. Similarly, one should not be misled by the fact that the delusional system presents a faint reflection of reality. It must, after all, carry some conviction. But this fact should not prevent us from proceeding to disentangle motive from myth.

Turning to the second question: why is the United States anti-communist? A conventional answer is that the United States opposes communism because of its aggressive, expansionist character. Thus it is argued that we do not seek to overthrow communism where it represents the status quo, as in Eastern Europe; and that when President ^{Kennedy,} in an often-quoted remark, said that

188

we would always prefer a Trujillo to a Castro~~m~~, he meant that "the power requirements of the struggle with the Soviet Union took precedence over the commitment to a 'decent democratic regime'." As to China:

"The containment of China has not been pursued simply because China has a communist government, but because of China's outlook generally and her policy in Asia particularly. It is China's insistence upon changing the Asian status quo, and the methods she has used, that explain American hostility." 189

Such proposals cannot withstand analysis. It is true, but irrelevant, that the U.S. will not risk nuclear destruction to roll back Communism; again, one cannot overlook the objective limits on American power. Tucker's interpretation of Kennedy's remark ^{seems to} presuppose that American hostility towards Castro was a consequence of his turn towards the Soviet Union, which is of course untrue. Perhaps one can argue the question whether American hostility was actually a determining factor in this move, but that it preceded it is beyond argument. 189a
With respect to China, Tucker's argument is ~~weaker still. What~~ ~~is that~~ ~~the~~ ~~methods~~ ~~did~~ ~~China~~ ~~use~~ ~~in~~ ~~changing~~ ~~the~~ ~~status~~ ~~quo~~ ~~beyond~~ ~~its~~ ~~borders~~? In what methods did China use in changing the status quo beyond its borders? In what respect were these methods "objectionable" in comparison with American ~~ex~~ methods ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~Far~~ ~~East~~? In what sense was the forceful reimposition of French colonialism, in opposition to a communist-led Vietnamese nationalist movement, an attempt to preserve the status quo after World War II? Why the effort to demonstrate that the Vietnamese revolutionaries -- or the backers of Arbenz ~~or~~ Bosch -- were Russian or Chinese agents, despite the evidence at hand, leading ultimately to the religious faith that this must be so (see p. XX)? The answers to these questions entirely undermine Tucker's effort to "explain American hostility."

Tucker is, in fact, ~~as~~ mistaken about ^{what counts as} ~~an~~ explanation of policy. Thus he is nearer the mark when he points out that Castro "would refuse to do our bidding" and ^{stand as} ~~would~~ a challenge to our otherwise undisputed hegemony in this hemisphere, but he does not pursue these observations to the degree of

specificity that any serious discussion of policy must achieve. In ~~what~~ what respects would Cuba refuse to do our bidding and challenge our hegemony? This question Tucker does not pose. He says merely that "America's interventionist and counter-revolutionary policy...may be accounted for in terms of a reasonably well-grounded fear that the American example might become irrelevant to much of the world," along with the "will to exercise dominion over others." These remarks are sufficiently vague to be immune to any objection. Tucker is in error when he states that "A radical critique cannot consistently accept this explanation." ¹⁹⁰ ~~It would, however,~~ ~~phenomenon~~ ~~phenomenon~~ be quite accurate to say that no serious critique, radical or not, can accept such proposals as an explanation ~~of~~ of policy. Rather, any serious critique will pursue the matter further, asking what elements of "the American ~~example~~ example" must some foreign society adopt to ~~alleviate~~ allay these fears. Was it ~~that~~ ^{Fear} that Guatemala would choose soccer rather than baseball as its national sport that precipitated the 1954 intervention? Was the Bay of Pigs invasion rooted in the fear that Cuban intellectuals would prefer ~~continental~~ ^{American-style} phenomenology to analytic philosophy? Is it our concern that the model of American political democracy might prove "irrelevant" that explains why the U.S. executive so prefers Brazil to Chile? Again, a serious look at real historical examples reveals at once the emptiness of Tucker's proposals. He believes himself to be offering a more cogent alternative to a "radical critique," ~~but~~ but in fact is offering no alternative at all, but merely abstracting away from the particular specific questions that must be faced by any serious effort, radical or not, to explain the American policy of counterrevolutionary intervention.

The question remains: why is the U.S. anti-Communist? Or a further

question: why has the U.S. been anti-fascist (though selectively)? Why was fascist Japan evil in 1940, while fascist Greece and Portugal (preserving the status quo in Africa) are quite tolerable today? And why is the U.S. generally anti-colonialist, say in Indonesia shortly after World War II where the conservative nationalist leadership appeared at first to favor foreign investment, but ^(reluctantly) not in Indochina where the alternative to a barely disguised

French colonialism was an indigenous communist resistance? It is not too difficult to discern a criterion that serves rather well to determine which elements in foreign lands receive support, and which are labelled enemies. It is surely not the humanitarian impulse (see note 177) nor the prospects for development that determine the official U.S. response: China or Cuba might well have profited from capital grants for development -- more so, at least, than from blockade, invasion, and harassment. Nor is it the fear of our great power rivals that leads us to intervene half way around the world, as is plainly shown by the determined effort to prove that Russia ^{and} China ~~were~~ responsible for the "internal aggression" in Vietnam, in the face of the ^{and analogous efforts in the Caribbean.} evidence that they were not, Nor do democratic or authoritarian rule, blood-thirstiness, aggressiveness, or a threat to U.S. security (in the proper sense of the term) provide a plausible criterion. Brazil and South Africa are as vicious as they come. The ^{horrendous} Indonesian massacre of 1965 was greeted ^{with} calm, and in some circles, ^{the whole sequence of events evoked only} polite applause. China has been the least aggressive of the great powers.

The Viet Minh and the Pathet Lao are hardly a threat to U.S. security.

Fascist Japan was no doubt an aggressive power -- in some ways, not unlike the U.S. today¹⁹¹ -- but the U.S. was prepared to seek a modus vivendi in 1939 provided that U.S. rights and interests on the mainland were guaranteed. And fascist Greece is quite all right today; it plays its NATO role, provides bases for U.S. naval forces,¹⁹² and as an added attraction, there is -- as

Secretary of Commerce Maurice Stans put it so lyrically a few months ago --
 "the welcome that is given here to American companies and the sense of security
 193
 the Government of Greece is imparting to them."

Friends and enemies can be identified, to a ~~very~~ ^{rather} good first approximation,
 in terms of their role in maintaining an integrated global economy in which
 American capital can operate with relative freedom. The so-called "communist"
 powers are particularly evil because their "do-it-yourself" model of development
 tends to extricate them from this system. For this reason, even European
 colonialism, which was bad enough, is preferable to indigenous Communism. For the
 same reason, Washington will prefer a Trujillo to a Castro. ^P The Study Group of
 the Woodrow Wilson Foundation and the National Planning Association was perceptive,
 and more honest than many contemporary ideologists, when it described "the primary
 threat of communism" as the economic transformation of the communist powers "in
 ways which reduce their willingness and ability to complement the industrial
 194
 economies of the West," their refusal to play the game of comparative advantage
 and to rely primarily on foreign investment for development. If the "developing
 nations" choose to use their resources for their own purposes, or to carry out
 internal social change in ways which will reduce their contribution to the
 industrial economies of the ^{state} capitalist world, these powers must be prepared to
 employ sufficient force to prevent such unreasonable behavior, which will no doubt
 be described as "internal aggression" by agents of international communism.
 The Soviet Union reacts no differently when Czechoslovakia seeks a degree of independ-
 ence or social change. ~~_____~~

^P ~~_____~~ At a much different level of domination, British auto
 workers must not be permitted to demand too great economic benefits or a share in
 management in the Ford plant, and must remain subject ~~to the threats~~ to the threats
 that can be wielded quite effectively by an international corporation. In East
 Asia, which ^{many} ~~may~~ regard as a most promising region for the "internationalization
 195
 of production" as well as for supplying raw materials, the

problems will be particularly acute. Surely such considerations lie at the very core of American foreign policy, a conclusion that is in no way ~~surprising~~ surprising when we see who ^{staffs the executive, which} ~~designs and implements~~ foreign policy. ^P To be sure, it will often be maintained that ~~XXXX~~ U.S. policy is motivated by a ~~XXX~~ concern for political democracy. To test the force of this concern, we can consider how U.S. policy typically evolves when political democracy is destroyed, ^{while} ~~the~~ U.S. economic intervention is freed from constraints -- and we can compare such policy with the typical U.S. reaction when an economy is closed to American economic penetration (whether or not ~~representative~~ political democracy, in the American sense, is ~~maintained~~ more or less maintained). Latin America provides an ample (though by no means complete) set of test cases. Considering American policy towards Trujillo, ~~and Batista~~ ~~and Castro~~ and Castro, Brazil and Chile, Guatemala for the past two decades, the Dominican republic in 1965, and so on, there can be little doubt as to the conclusion of such an investigation. Connel-Smith, in a study by no means hostile to U.S. policy, puts the matter in terms that seem quite ^{adequate:} ~~adequate:~~

"...United States concern for representative democracy in Latin America is a facet of her anti-communist policy. There has been no serious question of her intervening in the case of the many right-wing military coups, from which, of course, this policy generally has benefited. It is only when her own concept of democracy, closely identified with private, capitalistic enterprise, is threatened by communism that ~~she~~ she has felt impelled to demand collective action to defend it" (op.cit., p. 343-4).

~~...by such considerations as the~~
~~...of American foreign policy...~~
~~...the executive branch...~~
~~...~~

It may be argued, with justice, that this view is ~~...~~
no more than a first approximation to an understanding of foreign policy, and
omits many second-order considerations. Thus it would not be correct to
claim that formation of foreign policy is in the interests of a monolithic
corporate elite. On the contrary, there are conflicting interests. But
we would expect to find, and do find, that those interests that are particular-
ly concerned with foreign policy are well-represented in foreign policy-forma-
tion.¹⁹⁶ By similar dynamics, regulatory agencies tend to fall into the
hands of industries that are particularly concerned with their decisions.
It is, furthermore, no doubt true that at some point ideology takes on a
motive force of its own. There are other interacting, and for the most part
mutually supportive factors: the interest of the "state management" in the
Pentagon ⁱⁿ enhancing its own power;¹⁹⁷ ~~the role~~
of government-induced production of rapidly-obsolescing luxury goods (largely
military) as a technique of economic management, with a resulting need to
secure strategic raw materials; the usefulness of an external enemy as a
device to whip the taxpayer into line, in support of the production of waste;
^(and the costs of empire.)
the heady sense of power, to which academic ideologues in particular seem to
succumb so readily. Such factors as these produce a fairly stable system to
support the basic imperial drive, which is second nature to the men of power
in the state executive in any event.¹⁹⁸ There are many specific factors that
must be considered in a detailed examination of particular decisions, such as
those that led us ever more deeply into Indochina. Nevertheless, it seems

reasonably clear that American policy, like that of any great power, is guided by the "national interest" as conceived by dominant social groups, in this case, the goal of maximizing the free access by American capital to the markets and human and material resources of the world, the goal of maintaining to the fullest possible extent its freedom of operation in a global economy. At the same time, ideologists labor to mask these endeavors in a functional system of beliefs.

It is interesting that such analyses of foreign policy, which incorporate the material interests of private or quasi-private capital as a central factor interacting with others, are often characterized as "vulgar economic determinism" or the like when ~~_____~~ put forth by ^{opponents of the} ~~_____~~ system of private control of resources and the means of production. On the other ~~_____~~ hand, rather similar formulations ~~_____~~ receive little attention when they appear in official explanations of state policy or in right-wing literature. What is more, explanations that emphasize, say, vague emotional states (a feeling of insecurity or "irrelevance as a model") or ideological elements or error are not ~~_____~~ similarly characterized as "vulgar emotional (ideological) determinism" or "vulgar fallibilism." The term "vulgar economic determinism" is particularly surprising, given that those segments of (quasi-) private capital that are particularly ~~_____~~ affected by foreign policy decisions are generally well-represented in the formation of state policy. One would therefore expect that the view mislabeled "vulgar economic determinism" would serve as a kind of null hypothesis. Since it is, furthermore, quite plausible ~~_____~~ as an explanation for basic foreign policy decisions (and, not infrequently, the justifications offered for them), the reaction becomes still more curious. The label ~~_____~~ too often serves to deflect attention from the proposed explanations, which are much easier to ignore when misrepresented. This is a standard reaction to analysis that raises questions about prevailing ideology. Compare much of the response to "revisionist" work on the ~~_____~~ cold war several years ago. Many illustrations can be given. The matter is worth investigation in itself.

In the particular case of Vietnam, anti-communism served as a convenient device for mobilizing the American people to support imperial intervention. After a time, they were no longer willing to bear the costs or were appalled at the consequences. At this point, the propaganda device, no longer effective, was discarded. We now hear laments about the Cold War myths that led us to a "Greek tragedy" in Vietnam. But the war goes on.

The motive force for the American war in Indochina lies, it seems to me, where it was located in the earliest internal documents of the state executive: in the perceived significance of Southeast Asia for the integrated global system that was to be organized by American power -- and, under reasonable assumptions, dominated by American power for the ^(primary) benefit of those who possess that power. Although in ^(considerations may) the ~~the~~ 1960s, other and more irrational ~~considerations may~~ have predominated for a time, once ~~again~~ again today, the continuing U.S. effort to achieve a Korea-type solution in Indochina, whatever the cost to its people, can be traced to the same fundamental objectives.

200

VII

To my mind, ~~the~~ ^{more} one of the ~~the~~ depressing paragraphs of the Pentagon Study is in the epilogue, where the analyst comments on the change of tactics after the Tet offensive in early 1968 (IV, 603). He reports that "large and growing elements of the American public had begun to believe the cost ~~the~~ [of the war] had already reached unacceptable ~~levels~~ levels and would strongly protest a large increase in that cost." If the analyst is correct, then the public is at one with the executive in its almost exclusive concern with the costs to us of continued aggression. I doubt the accuracy of this assessment, but it seems that the Nixon Administration is

~~_____~~ counting on it, and is hoping that a less costly technological war, with automated fire control systems and mercenaries in place of GIs, with helicopter gunships and smart bombs in place of Westmoreland's "meatgrinder," may still succeed in destroying the infrastructure of the enemy and guaranteeing to the people of Indochina the particular variety of independence that U.S. global strategy will ~~_____~~ tolerate. If he is correct, then the McNamara study might just as well gather dust in the vaults of the Pentagon.

1

Gloria Emerson of the New York Times, ^{"Vietnam Diary,"} ~~the~~ McCall's, August, 1971.

2

Vietnam, Inc., Macmillan, 1971.

3

Gravel Edition of the Pentagon Papers: the Defense Department History of U.S. Decisionmaking on Vietnam, Beacon, 1971, IV, 48. His emphasis. References henceforth are to this edition, except where otherwise noted.

4

II, 360. In November 1961, the President authorized "execution of air-ground support," and three helicopter companies were operating by February 1 with 22 helicopters each (II, ⁶⁵⁶⁻⁷⁾ ~~457~~; the French, by comparison, had about 10 operational helicopters at the time of Dien Bieh Phu). Air force units were also deployed for air-ground support, and the first C-123's were sent for defoliation. U.S. advisory teams were extended to battalion level. In one week of May, Vietnamese Air Force and U.S. helicopter units flew about 350 sorties: offensive, air lift, etc. II, 656-8, 677. During 1962-3 the U.S. "provided helicopter companies for rapid tactical transport" and "tactical air and artillery support to assure ARVN ~~firepower~~ firepower superiority over the insurgents." This led to various complaints, e.g., "that supporting air and artillery were an inducement to rely on indiscriminate firepower as a substitute for aggressiveness." II, 455.

5

"Vietnam Blitz," New Republic, October 9, 1965; reprinted in S. Melman, ed., In the Name of America, Turnpike Press, 1968, p. 252. The preceding quote is from George McT. Kahin and John W. Lewis, The United States in Vietnam, Dial 1967, p.186.

~~Inside the RAND Corporation and out: My story.~~
See Anthony Russo, Ramparts, April 1971. Six years after its inception, the criminal program of a crop destruction was evaluated in a secret RAND report and found "ineffective against the Viet Cong."
As was entirely predictable when it was initiated in 1961, crop destruction "had its greatest effects on the enemy-controlled civilian populations" and "created widespread misery and many refugees." The program was discontinued largely because it proved "a liability to pacification." Defoliation

5a

"Vietcong Motivation and Morale," June-December 1965, reprinted in Vietnam Perspectives, May 1966, from Senate Armed Services and Appropriations Committee Hearings, Jan.-Feb. 1966. The RAND study is discussed by Gareth Porter in Indochina Chronicle, . The Pentagon Papers contain references to RAND Motivation and Morale Studies (IV, 23; ~~IX~~ IV, 47, Jan. 1966), presumably the same ones. Anthony Russo, who was working on the RAND studies in Saigon from February 1965 ~~from the fall of 1965~~ to September 1966, reports that the interviews revealed the NLF cadres to be dedicated idealists, ~~a~~ intensely committed to freeing Vietnam from foreign control. But regardless of the content of the interviews, the project leader (Leon Gouré, "an absolute hawk" and "the hottest thing on the American briefing circuit," probably the author of the memorandum cited above) would interpret them in such a way as to support his bias in favor of the use of American air power to weaken the ~~former~~ NLF. ~~He~~ Gouré's conclusion as of summer 1965 that refugee generation was hurting the NLF by depriving them of "strategic support" ~~immediately~~ soon became general U.S. military policy. Anthony Russo, "Inside the RAND Corporation and Out: My Story," Ramparts, April 1972.

5b

According to the report, "The interviews do not reveal any deep-seated resentment or hatred of the GVN or the Americans caused by air or artillery attacks on villages. [Deleted]." As Russo notes (ibid.) there may well be a divergence between the content of interviews and the conclusions of the briefer. Nevertheless, the statement may be literally correct. That is, it may well be true that refugees interviewed by agents of the military power that has blasted them out of their homes will say that they really didn't mind. I noticed the same, quite predictable phenomenon interviewing refugees from the Plain of Jars in Laos shortly after they had been removed to miserable camps near Vientiane. Quite a few said, at first, that they harbored no resentment against the Americans who had bombed their villages so intensively that they had to hide in tunnels deep in the forest to survive, farming only at night because of the ever-present terror from the ~~many~~ sky. The refugees, after all, are not imbeciles.

5
[REDACTED] 1965 [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Committee and Subcommittees on Dept. of [REDACTED] of
[REDACTED] Committee [REDACTED]
16.

6

Six years after its inception, the criminal program of crop destruction was evaluated in a secret RAND report and found "ineffective" against the Viet Cong. ⁶
See Russo, *ibid.*, [REDACTED] the author of the report.)
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The program was continued.

As was entirely predictable when it was initiated in 1961, crop destruction "had its greatest effects on the enemy-controlled civilian populations" and "created widespread misery and many refugees" (L. Craig Johnstone, Chief, Pacification Studies Group, Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, 1965-70, "Ecocide and the Geneva Protocol," Foreign Affairs, July 1971). Since "Neither the crop destruction program nor the defoliation program was anything but a liability to pacification," both have been phased out. Besides, Rome Plows ~~are~~ are probably a more efficient tool~~s~~ of destruction. On this matter, see Arthur H. Westing, "Leveling the Jungle," Environment, vol. 13, no. 9, November 1971.

There is only casual and uninformative reference in the Pentagon Study to the crop destruction and defoliation programs, as to most of the programs directed against the people of South Vietnam. The military regarded it as a "gimmick" from the start, at best an "R&D effort" (II, 658). The victims, had they been asked, might have chosen different terms.

7

Col. Charles Smith of the 196th Light Infantry Brigade, quoted by Griffiths, *op.cit.*, p. 67. Jean-Claude Pomonti of Le Monde reports that "a series of urban ghettos have sprung up" since 1965, containing "at least half the population, whereas in 1960 the country was still 85% rural." "The other South Vietnam," Foreign Affairs, January, 1972.

8

Reference is to the massacre that took place in February 1968 after the Communist capture of Hue, [REDACTED]. Don Oberdorfer describes this as "the most extensive political slaughter of the war" (Tet, Doubleday, 1971, p. 201). Estimates of those killed by the Communists range from 200 (police chief of Hue) to 2800 (Oberdorfer, based on data from Douglas Pike whom he regards, surprisingly, as a reliable source).

Len Ackland, an IVS worker in Hue in 1967 who returned in April 1968 to investigate, was told by American and Vietnamese officials that about 700 Vietnamese were killed by the VC, an estimate generally supported by his investigations, which also indicate that the killings were by local VC and primarily in the last days of the bloody month-long battle as the force was retreating. Whatever the exact numbers may be, there is no doubt that a brutal massacre took place.

There was also another massacre in Hue at the same time, scarcely mentioned by Oberdorfer (who reports "something over a hundred ~~civilians~~ civilians" killed at My Lai, referring to ^{a book by} ~~Seymour Hersh~~ Seymour Hersh, ^{where the number is} ~~estimated~~ ⁴⁰⁰⁻⁵⁰⁰ to be about ~~4000~~ -- My Lai 4, Random House, 1970) and forgotten by most others. The same officials who reported 700 killed by the VC estimated that 3-4000 ^{and shelling} civilians had been killed in the US-GVN bombing (Ackland, "Hue," unpublished). Undersecretary of the Air Force Townsend Hoopes reports that 2000 ^{civilians} were buried in the rubble of the bombardment. The NLF reports that 2000 victims of the bombardment were buried in mass graves (Oberdorfer reports that "2800 victims of the occupation," victims of the Communist "political slaughter," were discovered in mass graves). The Marines, according to Oberdorfer, list "Communist losses" at more than 5000, while Hoopes states that a "sizable part" of the Communist force of 1000 men who had captured the city escaped. A French ~~priest~~ priest from Hue estimates that about 1100 ^(mostly students, teachers, priests) were killed by the GVN after the Marines had recaptured the city (Oriana Fallaci, "Working up to killing," Washington Monthly, February 1972). Richard West, ^{Vietnamese and a handful of foreigners} who was in Hue shortly after, estimates "several hundred" killed by Communists and suggests that victims of My Lai-style massacres may be among those in the mass graves (New Statesman, Jan. 28, 1972). Griffiths, whose book contains pictures of the fighting in Hue, concludes that most of the victims "were killed by the most hysterical use of American firepower ever seen," and then designated ~~as~~ "as the victims of a Communist massacre." ^(op. cit., p. 137.) See my At war with Asia, Pantheon, 1970, p. 295-6 and E.S. Herman, Atrocities in Vietnam, Pilgrim, 1970, p. 37f. for some discussion and references concerning both massacres.

In the U.S. and England, ^{the story} Hue has become famous as the classic example of a Communist bloodbath.

9

Anthony Lake and Roger Morris, "The human reality of realpolitik," Foreign Policy, Fall, 1971.

10

United States-Vietnam Relations, 1945-1967, book 8, 144-5, Government Printing Office, 1971; the government offset edition of the Pentagon Papers, henceforth referred to as DOD.

11

For biographical data, see Eqbal Ahmad, "Revolutionary war and counterinsurgency," Journal of International Affairs, vol. XXV, no. 1, 1971.

12

George K. Tanham and Dennis J. Duncanson, "Some dilemmas of counterinsurgency," Foreign Affairs, October, 1969 -- an illuminating remark, with implications that should be carefully considered.

13

NSC 48/1, December 23, 1949; ibid., p. 248.

14

See Anthony Russo's account of the "naively carefree attitude" at RAND, op.cit.

15

Major-General George S. Beatty, Chief of the U.S. military mission in Brazil, Hearings before the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, 92nd Congress, first session, May, 1971, Government Printing Office, 1971, p. 86.

15a

See several essays in N. Chomsky and H. Zinn, eds., Critical Essays on the Pentagon Papers, Beacon, 1972.

~~Hearings before the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, 92nd Congress, First session, May, 1971, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971, p. 86.~~

16 "Executive privilege!)

"Secrecy in a free society," The Nation, November 8, 1971.

17

In a letter of 1787, quoted by Hannah Arendt, On Revolution, Viking, 1965, p. 241.

18

On this matter, see V. Brodine and M. Selden, "The Kissinger-Nixon doctrine," in Brodine et.al., Open Secret, Harper and Row, New York, 1972.

19

Senator Stuart Symington, Congressional Record, August 3, 1971, S12931.

20

Senator Symington, Congressional Record, October 4, 1971, S15763. The Thai soldiers describe themselves as regular army troops serving in Laos for extra pay. It was reported that 12,000 would be "available for combat" by March 1, 1972. See stories by Don Ronk and Tammy Arbuckle, reprinted in the Congressional Record, October 4, 1971, S15763-4. "Senior U.S. sources" in Bangkok confirm these reports (see Washington Post, Boston Globe, January 22, 1972).

21

Hearings before the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate, 92nd Congress, First session, July, 1971, p. 4275 - 7.

22

Congressional Record, August 3, S12956.

23

Congressional Record, October 4, S15773-4. It was left to Senator Hart to

observe that "all of the screaming about law and order in this country is talking about something miniscule if in fact it is established that one branch of the Government ignores the law of the lawmakers." August 3, SL2955.

24

Toward a General Theory of the First Amendment, Random House, 1966, p. 20.

25

18 USC 793d, e. Classified information is continually leaked to correspondents [redacted] for the particular purposes of the Administration, and it is a common practice for ex-officials to release such information and documents in memoirs. An example relevant to the present case is Lyndon Johnson's The Vantage Point (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), which contains classified documents that appear in the Pentagon Papers, presented, arguably, for personal gain. See Jack Anderson, "LBJ gets \$1 million for secrets Ellsberg gave away," Chicago Daily News, November 30, 1971. An ex-President has no special rights in this regard. Similarly, pledges of secrecy are freely violated by the executive for its own purposes, as when Nixon chose to ^{reveal} ~~secret~~ secret negotiations on Indochina on January 25, 1972. The negotiations volumes of the Pentagon Study are still suppressed, as super-sensitive, but participants are leaking their private versions to the press, with names and dates. See Benjamin Welles, New York Times, February 14, 1972. ^P We await, with bated breath, the arrest of Lyndon Johnson and others.

26 Near v. Minnesota, 1931,

[redacted] (cited by Justice Brennan, concurring in the decision against prior restraint in the case of the Pentagon Papers. See The Pentagon Papers, Bantam Books, New York Times, 1971, p. 656.

27

The President's War, Lippincott, 1971, pp. ^{313,} 297-8. This is, however, hardly the most grotesque feature of the Tonkin Gulf story.

28

Op.cit., introduction. For a review of the history of this matter, see Edward G. Hudon, Freedom of Speech and Press in America, Public Affairs Press, 1963.

29

Cited in the N.Y. Times edition of the Pentagon Papers, Bantam, p. 467. The Times commentator (Fox Butterfield) states that "Neither General Westmoreland's requests nor President Johnson's approvals were made public." In fact, as usual, the information had leaked to the press, and ~~the request (though not the approval) was mentioned in a Times article from Saigon which~~ the Pentagon historian states "reflected thinking of many junior and mid-level officials in both the U.S. Mission and the GVN" (II, 544). This is one of many examples which indicate that a careful observer who was sufficiently realistic to treat government pronouncements with utter cynicism might be able to follow events as they unfolded. Another example is the Hanson Baldwin report of the secret BARREL ROLL air strikes in Laos in 1964, cited above.

30

III, 217, 623; November 8, 1964. The Joint Chiefs commented, reassuringly, that the main risk is not to us but to the Chinese. ~~the~~ "'Possibly even the use of nuclear weapons at some point' is of course why we spend billions ~~of dollars~~ to have them." Therefore they believed the risk of nuclear war to be low. The Joint Chiefs add that the loss of South Vietnam would be a disaster, worse even than the loss of Berlin (III, 628), rejecting the view of the NSC working group that "the loss of South Vietnam" only "could" be as serious as the loss of ~~the~~ Berlin.

31

Quoted with some appropriate comment by James Aronson, "The media and the message," in Chomsky and Zinn, eds., op.cit.

32

William Bundy, commenting on problems of lying, IV, 611.

33

On the contrary, falsification by government officials is a crime. For discussion, see Peter Dale Scott, The War Conspiracy, Bobbs-Merrill, 1972, a detailed examination of fraud and deception in the course of the Indochina war.

34

See above, at note 30. In December 1965, the "intelligence community" estimated at almost 50-50 the probability that significant U.S. escalation would lead to the introduction of Chinese forces, always understood as the trigger for nuclear

"retaliation." With the exception of ~~States~~ State's INR, intelligence appeared to favor

escalation, including strikes against North Vietnamese petroleum reserves (IV, 64-5). Senator Symington, long an advocate of more extensive use of airpower, has recently expressed the view that B-52 raids in northern Laos, far from the Ho Chi Minh trail and conducted in secrecy, "are dangerous to the security of the United States" and that "any air activity around northern Laos" has in it the incipient danger of starting a major war." Congressional Record, August 3, 1971, S12939, S12951.

35 Daniel Guérin, ed., Ni Dieu ni Maître, Lausanne, undated, p. 115.

36 Dien Tin, March 30, 1971. Cited by Peter King, "The political balance in Saigon," Pacific Affairs, Fall, 1971, p. 417.

37
Ibid., p. 405.

38 William Sullivan, cited by Senator ^{Kennedy,} Congressional Record, August
3, 1971, S12941. ~~Sullivan was concerned about the~~

... "The Deceit..." (Dear Report,

~~Witnessed and signed by the members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, September~~

On the bombing, see
several articles in N.S. Adams and A.W. McCoy, Laos:

War and Revolution, Harper and Row, 1970, and my At War With Asia, chapter 4.

The person primarily responsible for public awareness of this matter is Fred Branfman, a Lao-speaking ^{American who spent several years} ~~in~~ in Laos. Some of the documentation he has accumulated appears as Appendix II, Hearings before the Kennedy Subcommittee on Refugee Problems of the Senate Judiciary Committee, 92nd Congress, First session, April, 1971. See also his Voices from the Plain of Jars, Harper and Row, 1972. Another Lao-speaking American, ^{Walter} ~~Walter~~ Haney, has compiled a detailed collection of refugee interviews: "A survey of civilian ^{war} casualties

among refugees from the Plain of Jars," 1971. It appears in Appendix II, Hearings before the Kennedy Subcommittee, July 22, 1971. The refugees describe not only a wide range of bombs and anti-personnel weapons, but also several types of poison. As in other cases, the bombing seemed to have little connection with ground combat, contrary to the government's contention, and in many instances there were no soldiers nearby. Even setting aside the description of these poisons from three refugee camps, no honest observer can be in doubt as to the meaning of this material. On far weaker evidence, Americans have properly condemned atrocities committed by others.

Arthur Dommen, in his Conflict in Laos (revised edition, Praeger, 1971), speaks of "The continual disruptions caused by American bombings..." (p. 308) which "inconvenienced the Pathet Lao" (p. 311, where there appears his only reference to the impact of the bombing in northern Laos). ~~I am not sure that he is~~
~~referring to the impact of the bombing in northern Laos.~~ Such terms as "disruption" and "inconvenience" do not quite convey the essence of the experiences recounted by the refugees, as Dommen is surely well aware, nor of the ~~that~~ eye-witness testimony of Jacques Decornoy of Le Monde in 1968 (see Adams and McCoy, op.cit.), never, to my knowledge, reported in the American press.

39

T.D. Allman, "Landscape without figures," Manchester Guardian Weekly, January 1, 1972; ~~Far Eastern Economic Review~~, Far Eastern Economic Review, January 8, 1972. Compare his eye-witness report with that ~~of~~ of Air Force Secretary Robert Seamans, who states that he has visited northern Laos and has "seen no evidence of indiscriminate bombing" (George Wilson, Washington Post, Boston Globe, January 17, 1972). Even in government-controlled areas, fields and villages are littered with unexploded cluster bombs (anti-personnel). See the ~~eye-witness~~ eye-witness report of Michael Morrow, near Luang Prabang, Dispatch News Service International, January 10, 1972. The same release includes a report by Joe Nicholson of interviews with combat pilots on the bombing of villages in Laos, where, in the words of one photo interpreter at Udorn Air Base, Thailand, "All human activity was considered enemy activity."

40

My own views on this matter, relying on material prior to the Pentagon study, are presented in "The rule of force in international affairs," Yale Law Journal, vol. 80, no. 7, June 1971. See the references cited there for extensive discussion. See also the important essays in R.A. Falk, Legal Order in a Violent World, Princeton, 1968, and in R.A. Falk, ed., The International Law of Civil War, John Hopkins Press, 1971.

41

Noting that this doctrine, too, was devised to protect a tyrant from the right of resistance. See Gerald A. Sumida, "The right of revolution," in Charles A. Barker, ed., Power and Law, John Hopkins Press, 1971, p. 133.

42

See R.A. Falk, et. al., Vietnam and International Law, O'Hare, 1967, p. 27f.

43

~~_____~~ ^{Doc,)} book 10, 736-7. The same wording is repeated in an NSC policy statement of December, 1954, ~~844~~ 844. Also June-July, 1959 (1203).

~~_____~~
43a Congressional Record, June 6, 1967, 57733f. Other sources give slightly different, though substantively
44 identical wording.

Much later the documents commonly use the same terms. E.g., in April, 1966: "The overall objective is to cause ^{NVN} ~~North Vietnam~~ to cease supporting, directing, and controlling the insurgencies in South Vietnam and Laos" (IV, 81). See also IV, 59, 562, etc.

45

Lyndon Johnson, September 28, 1964. Cited in ^{Falk, et.al.,)} Vietnam and International Law, p. 35.

46

^{In March 1965 the)}
~~III~~ III Marine Expeditionary Force was renamed the "III Marine Amphibious Force," to avoid offending Vietnamese sensibilities -- for what Ambassador Sullivan referred to elsewhere as "cosmetic purposes" (II, 282, 319~~8~~; 355~~1~~; III, 462).

47

See hearings before the Subcommittee on U.S. Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad of the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, 91st Congress, first session, Part 3: Kingdom of Thailand, 1969, pp. 646-7, 753-4, 851-3. The testimony here might be usefully contrasted with the remarks by Senator Gordon Allott, who claims that "Red Chinese troops were [in 1962] roaming at will through a good portion of northern Thailand" and "still are, except that now they are actually engaging in acts of war" (August 12, 1969, reprinted in Congressional Record, August 3, 1971, S12948).

48

For a survey of the U.S. government case, see my At War With Asia, chapter 4. For a further effort to determine the facts, see F. Branfman, "Presidential war in Laos," in Adams and McCoy, op.cit. Dommen gives the remarkably low estimate that the North Vietnamese had about one combat regiment available in

Northern Laos ~~as of 1968~~ (as of 1968; op.cit., p. 386). The literature must be treated with caution when specific claims are made. Tracing references, one often discovers that the original source was an obviously interested party who supplied no evidence, the alleged statement of an unidentified official of some government, or an intelligence report that is unavailable (so that its basis, and possible qualifications, are unknown), etc. As an example, consider the unqualified statement by Paul F. Langer and Joseph J. Zasloff (North Vietnam and the Pathet Lao, Harvard, 1970) the source used by Dommen for his calculation, above) that "An estimated 67,000 ~~North Vietnamese military personnel~~ now serve in Laos" (p.151). Their sole source is a statement by President Nixon on March 6, 1970 to this effect. But this speech was full of errors of fact (see Scott, op.cit., ^{chapter 2;} Branfman, ~~op.cit.~~ "Presidential War in Laos"), and the particular figure quoted is highly questionable, ^{if only} ~~not only~~ because U.S. military attachés in Vientiane were giving a figure of 50,000 or less at exactly the same time (cf. Branfman, ~~ibid.~~ ibid., p.269; At War with Asia, p. 214, citing D.S. Greenway of Time-Life). The question of DRV participation, military or otherwise, in events in Laos is an important one, but the evidence that is available is slim, the original sources on all sides are partisan and untrustworthy, and the conclusions stated often go far beyond the evidence and are then repeated uncritically elsewhere.

According to a recent report, the Royal Lao Government was holding 92 North Vietnamese prisoners as compared with 2494 Pathet Lao prisoners ("Laos: April 1971).

Northern Laos (op.cit., p. 386). The literature must be treated with caution when specific claims are made, particularly, where no evidence is cited. Tracing references, one often discovers ~~that the original source was an obviously interested party who supplied~~ ^{official of some government,} ~~no evidence, the alleged statement of an unidentified person, or an~~ ^{intelligence report} ~~that is unavailable (so that its basis, and qualifications,~~ ^{are unknown}), and so on. It must also be recalled that when U.S. sources give estimates of North Vietnamese "troops," they include every old man carrying a bag of rice on his back. The question of DRV participation, military or otherwise, in events in Laos is an important one, but the evidence that is available is slim, ~~and the~~ ^{the original source, on all} ~~sides partisan and untrustworthy, and the~~ ^{conclusions stated (e.g., in the} ~~studies discussed in At War with Asia; cf. also~~ ^{the evidence,)} ~~noted in 133) often go far beyond it, and are then repeated uncritically elsewhere.~~ According to a recent report, ~~the Royal Lao Government was holding 92 North Vietnamese~~

~~prisoners, as compared with 2494 Pathet Lao prisoners.~~ Staff Report of the Subcommittee on U.S. Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad, of the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, April, 1971, p. 20). Carl Strock reports ~~that~~ (Far Eastern Economic Review, January 30, 1971) that the Red Cross lists them as "ethnic Vietnamese," leaving open the possibility that they come from Laos' own large Vietnamese community." The U.S. press ~~generally~~ ^{generally} refers to Pathet Lao actions as "North Vietnamese." ~~Strock~~ Strock also reports at least 1500 U.S. casualties, including 400 killed and more than 200 missing in Laos.

49

C. Cooper, The Lost Crusade, Dodd, Mead, 1970, pp. 264-5.

50

Walt Rostow has claimed that the Indochinese Communists were "enflamed" by Stalin after World War II, and that Stalin was also ~~responsible~~ responsible for the Greek rebellion. For some quotes, see my American Power and the New Mandarins, Pantheon, 1969, pp. 327-8, 360. For discussion of the facts, with regard to Greece, see G. Kolko, The Politics of War, Random House, 1968; J. and G. Kolko, The Limits of Power, Harper and Row, 1972. For some parallels between Greece and Vietnam, see L.S. Stavrianos, "Greece's other history," New York Review, June 17, 1971. The beliefs of Rostow and others with regard to Greece (note that Rostow, in the study cited, presents no evidence to support his claims) can at least be attributed

to ignorance; not so with regard to Indochina. On the shift from Moscow to "Peiping" as the center of international aggression in U.S. demonology, see John Gittings, "The great Asian conspiracy," in E. Friedman and M. Selden, eds., America's Asia, Pantheon Books, 1971.

~~was adopted as the center of "vigilant anti-communism" (see, e.g.),~~
~~and to North Vietnam from 1962 to 1964 (II, 110), when~~
~~the U.S. government engaged in a~~
~~series of operations in South Vietnam. The NSC Working Group (November, 1964)~~
~~believed that "Moscow's role in Vietnam is likely to remain a relatively minor one" (II, 115).~~

51

As compared with the "democratically-elected Government of the Republic of Korea," NSC 8/2, March, 1949; ~~DoD~~, book 8, 269.

52

Cited by Cooper, The Lost Crusade, p. 171. Cooper wonders only why he didn't mention the North Vietnamese, "who, even more than the Chinese Communists, were causing the mischief in Laos and Vietnam." ^{See below, pp. XXF.)} In June, 1956, after repeating the domino theory, Kennedy extolled the "political liberty" of South Vietnam, which was "an inspiration" for "all parts of Asia -- ^{and} indeed the world." Cooper, p. 168. A bit "melodramatic," Cooper feels, but otherwise unexceptionable. *See below, at note 168a, for a fuller quote.*

53

This objective was assigned 20% importance, as compared with 70% importance to the objective: "To avoid a humiliating U.S. defeat (to our reputation as a guarantor)" (III, 349).

54

See also the conclusions of William Bundy, in 1971, discussed in my Problems of Knowledge and Freedom, Pantheon Books, 1971, pp. 82-3.

55

~~See the references of note 48, note 144. In July 1967, it was discovered that~~
~~disguised as to~~
~~Chinese nationalist agents, mingling so as to appear to be South Vietnamese with Nung~~
~~anecdotes, were being used by the GVN "on covert operations."~~

54a

See references of notes 48 and 144. In July 1967 it was discovered that Chinese nationalists, "disguised so as to appear to be South Vietnamese with Nung ancestry," were being used on covert operations by the GVN, apparently the result of a secret agreement of 1966. The JCS disapproved, "despite appeals from COMUSMACV." MACV "advised against US cooperation" in the occupation by the GVN of an island claimed by Communist and Nationalist China, with the intention of constructing an airfield (II, 402). Americans who have been engaged in clandestine operations in Indochina report the presence of CIA-trained Chinese nationalists, but I have no way of verifying these reports. Many Chinese (up to 50,000) ~~have been~~ ^{were} reported in North Vietnam in construction and repair operations during the bombing of the North, but these reports rarely note that the U.S. was bombing an internal Chinese railway, the only rail connection between Southwestern China and the rest of the country, which happened to pass near Hanoi.

55

See Gareth Porter, "After Geneva: subverting Laotian neutrality," in Adams and McCoy, op.cit.; Scott, op.cit., chapter 2; Dommen, ~~open~~ op.cit.; and references cited in these works and below (notes 132a-134a). It is quite possible that there was North Vietnamese support, as Dommen asserts, on evidence that hardly seems compelling. Thai pilots were sent to Laos for counterinsurgency ~~open~~ missions in March 1964. The role of Thai rangers in covert operations in Laos (Operation Hardnose) remains obscure (see III, 578, 610; see also note 144 below). U.S. involvement at this time appears to have been extensive. Refugees report bombing from May 1964. For refugee reports, see references of note 38.

55a

The image of "Indian fighting" was much ~~in~~ on the minds of the American military. See American Power and the New Mandarins, chapter 3, note 42, for references from General Maxwell Taylor and others. See also Michael Rogin, "Liberal Society and the Indian Question," Politics and Society, May 1971.

56

II, 693; Bureau of Intelligence and Research, State Department, Dec. 3, 1962.

57

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., A Thousand Days, Houghton Mifflin, 1965, p. 759.

58

See note 4. For some references from the public record, see my "Rule of force" in international affairs."

59

I disregard certain other arguments that have been offered. E.g. Wilson C. McWilliams observes, with supreme irrelevance, that "Washington did not think it was planning an aggressive war," It was ~~not~~ guilty only of inaccuracy, not crime. N.Y. Times Book Review, Sept. 26, 1971, review of R. Stavins, R.J. Barnett and M.G. Raskin, Washington Plans an Aggressive War, Random House, 1971 -- an accurate title for this study, which adds considerable supplementary information ~~to~~ to the Pentagon analyses, ~~Papers~~ Papers, and a perceptive ~~analysis~~ ^{analysis} as well. Like much other antiwar literature, this book has been reviewed in a most irresponsible manner. E.g., T.D. Allman -- who has done first-rate reporting from Indochina -- writes that Stavins' section is a "rehash of the Pentagon Papers"; ~~however~~ "unfortunately all the authors of Washington Plans^s an Aggressive War have done is to try to cash in on a quickie imitation of The Pentagon Papers". ~~According to~~ The Guardian (London-Manchester) weekly, March 18, 1972. Putting aside the fact, obvious to any reader, that the book makes use of ^{extensive} interviews and other sources, the absurdity of the ~~accusation~~ ^{accusation is} evident merely from the fact that the book was in press well before the Pentagon Papers were released.

~~58~~ ~~59~~ ~~60~~ ~~61~~ ~~62~~ ~~63~~ ~~64~~ ~~65~~ ~~66~~ ~~67~~ ~~68~~ ~~69~~ ~~70~~ ~~71~~ ~~72~~ ~~73~~ ~~74~~ ~~75~~ ~~76~~ ~~77~~ ~~78~~ ~~79~~ ~~80~~ ~~81~~ ~~82~~ ~~83~~ ~~84~~ ~~85~~ ~~86~~ ~~87~~ ~~88~~ ~~89~~ ~~90~~ ~~91~~ ~~92~~ ~~93~~ ~~94~~ ~~95~~ ~~96~~ ~~97~~ ~~98~~ ~~99~~ ~~100~~

~~of some references from the public record, such as "The United States and the law of mankind," Power and Law, p. 100. Discussing the same matter, P. E. Corbett concludes that the various General Assembly resolutions "appear to place intervention on behalf of an existing government on the same footing as aid to its rebel opposition," noting, however, that this demands a radical change in established practice of states. "The Vietnam struggle," in The International Law of Civil War, pp. 374, 402.~~

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~~Williams observes, when discussing intervention, that intervention is~~

~~which is a "violation of the law of nations." It is generally agreed that~~

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⁶⁰ The Annual Report of the Secretary-General, 16 June 1964 to 15 June 1965, Doc. A/6001, p. 48, cited by William Bruce, "The United States and the law of mankind," Power and Law, p. 100. Discussing the same matter, P. E. Corbett concludes that the various General Assembly resolutions "appear to place intervention on behalf of an existing government on the same footing as aid to its rebel opposition," noting, however, that this demands a radical change in established practice of states. "The Vietnam struggle," in The International Law of Civil War, pp. 374, 402.

⁶¹ As reported by John Spencer, in American Journal of International Law, 61, no. 3, July, 1967, 839-40; cited by Nam-Yearl Chai, "Law as a barrier to change," in Power and Law, p. 114. Chai goes on to illustrate how "the rules of law were used as legal barriers by Japan and Western powers to frustrate the Korean aspirations for national independence" and to explain why "Koreans regarded law as an instrument of oppression."

⁶² E. Weisband and T. M. Franck, "The Brezhnev-Johnson Two-World Doctrine," Transaction, vol. 8, no. 12, Oct. 1971. See also Franck and Weisband, World Politics, Oxford, 1971, for an elaboration of these themes.

⁶³ In January 1962, VC forces were estimated at 16,500, as compared to "South Vietnamese" forces of more than 175,000, with additional paramilitary forces of 110,000 (II, 656).

⁶⁴The Lost Crusade, p. 256. Cf. also ^{pp. 313-4} 430.

⁶⁵Cf. Jean Lacouture, Vietnam: between two truces, N.Y., Random House, 1966, p. 188.

⁶⁶See below, note 147.

⁶⁷J. T. McAlister, Jr. and Paul Mus, The Vietnamese and their Revolution, Harper and Row, 1970, p. 160. For a particularly forceful statement to this effect, referring more generally to third world revolutionaries, see Bernard Fall, Street without Joy, Stackpole, 1964, p. 373, cited in "The rule of force in international affairs," p. 1467. See pp. XXF, below.

⁶⁸War of the Vanquished, Harper and Row, 1971, p. 214f. The book is interesting for a number of revelations, in particular, in the support it gives to persistent rumors of a Diem-Nhu arrangement with Hanoi that was imminent in 1963, just prior to the coup that overthrew the Diem regime.

⁶⁹IV, 408-9. Shortly after the Iron Triangle was "destroyed" in Operation CEDAR FALLS, "basically the same area" was invaded again in Operation JUNCTION CITY. The reader will find a brief description of the latter, but not the official map indicating the areas, including many villages, scheduled for destruction by preliminary air and artillery bombardment.

⁷⁰Griffiths, op. cit., ^{p. 29.} Bernard Fall, Last Reflections on a War, Doubleday, 1967, p. 248. See Jonathan Schell, The Village of Ben Suc, Knopf, 1967.

⁷¹MacGeorge Bundy, Feb. 7, 1965, III, 687-691. The reprisals against North Vietnam are ~~referred to~~ for "any VC act of violence to persons or property," as in the case of the Pleiku attack, where there was not even a pretense that North Vietnamese were involved. This is quite in accord with the policy statement of the NSC 10 years earlier, quoted above, p. .

⁷²April 6, 1964. The Security Council then proceeded to adopt a Resolution condemning reprisals as "incompatible with the purposes and principles of the

United Nations," For this and other references to the illegality of reprisal, ^{Falk et al.,} see Vietnam and International Law, pp. 53-4, 98-101.

⁷³In the North, at least. In the South, and under Nixon-Kissinger in Laos and Cambodia, the question arises in a different form. Cf. the comments by Peter King, cited above ^(at) (note 37). With memories of gas chambers, some may be reluctant (as I ^{have been} personally) to use such terms as "genocide." The question whether the term is technically appropriate, in the light of the UN Convention of 1948, is a different matter, however. It was considered by the Russell Tribunal, well before the significant escalation of the technological war in 1968, and on the basis of a small fraction of the evidence now available. See J. Duffett, ed., Against the Crime of Silence, O'Hare, 1968, pp. 612-643.

⁷⁴IV, 71-4. Discussing the plans to destroy North Vietnamese Petroleum reserves, the analyst notes that "Neither in OSD nor the White House had anyone opposed these measures on other than prudential grounds -- the risk of alienating allies or provoking Chinese or Russian intervention or uncertainty that results would justify either the risks or the costs" (74-5).

⁷⁵See Gabriel Kolko, in Duffett, op. cit., p. 224.

⁷⁶See Chronology of the Vietnam War, Book One, distributed by Association d'Amitié Franco-Vietnamienne, 5, rue Las Cases, 75-Paris (7).

⁷⁷Note that RT in 1965 amounted to 33,000 tons of bombs, of a total of about 530,000 dropped on NVN by end 1968. See The Air War in Indochina, Preliminary Report, October 1971, Cornell University Center for International Studies, p. SS-14. *Revised version to be published by Beacon, 1972.*

⁷⁸See my American Power and the New Mandarins, p. 15. Also "The rule of force in international affairs." See also B. Weisberg, ed., Ecocide in Indochina, Canfield Press, Harper and Row, ¹⁹⁷⁰ (in particular the eyewitness report by Orville Schell and Barry Weisberg, p. 24.

79 "This isn't Munich, it's Spain," Ramparts, Dec. 1965, reprinted in Last Reflections on War, ^{Doubleday, 1967,} p. 232-3.

80 The hospital compound that replaced it was bombed ~~here~~ on Dec. 26, 1971. See the eyewitness report of Banning Garrett, who visited a few days later, Guardian, Feb. 16, 1972; N. Y. Times, Feb. 10, 1972.

81 "The receiving end of the bombing," N. Y. Times, op. ed., Feb. 10, 1972.

82 Stavins et al., p. 182-3. Stavins' analysis is also interesting with regard to the "conspiracy" in the field against Washington. Pilots have further complained that interservice rivalries led to dangerous missions with high loss rate. See also Colonel James A. Donovan, Militarism, U.S.A., Scribners, 1970, p. 180f.

83 B-52 raids in 1965 in the densely populated Mekong Delta were reported by Bernard Fall, "Vietnam Blitz." Takashi Oka reported B-52 raids in "the populous delta" on Dec. 4, 1965 (In the Name of America, p. 248), noting that they not only caused civilian casualties but caused refugees to flee to government-controlled areas "because they could no longer bear the continuous bombings." Fall also flew on bombing attacks on undefended villages, at about the same time ("This isn't Munich, it's Spain"), as have many other writers. George Smith, a special forces sergeant captured by the NLF, reports B-52 raids (he believes, in Cambodia), along with constant and heavy bombing with napalm, 500 and 750 pound bombs, and so on, in the free-fire zone where his camp was located, the latter from Dec. 1964; George E. Smith, P.O.W.: Two Years with the Vietcong, ^{Press} Ramparts, 1971. Of course, the bombers were no more able to avoid villages than his P.O.W. camp. See also Russo, op. cit., on the effects of B-52 raids, as determined ^{from} refugee interviews. See also above, at notes 5a, 5b.

84 New Society, April 22, 1965, reprinted in B. Fall and M. Raskin, eds., The Vietnam Reader (Vintage, 1965), p. 261.

"Vietcong -- the unseen enemy in Vietnam,"

(General Accounting Office)

85 ^{in Cambodia} An investigating team of the GAO ^{from one area} concluded that US and South Vietnamese bombing is "a very significant cause of refugees and civilian casualties," and estimated that about one-third of the six million population may be refugees. Discussing the investigation, undertaken at his request, Senator Kennedy quoted an ~~intelligence~~ intelligence memorandum reporting that "what the villagers feared most was the possibility of indiscriminate artillery and air strikes." ~~Captured American correspondents have given similar accounts. The~~ story is by now familiar, including the U.S. government denials and claims that ~~it is the North Vietnamese invasion that is the cause, and the~~ ^{assessment,} by reporters, that bombing and artillery fire are ^{a major, perhaps} the primary factor, with the savagery of the Saigon army forces, another carry-over from the days of the French, adding its contribution. And a final note ^{from the GAO report:} "The policy of the United States is not to become involved with the problems of civilian war victims in Cambodia." See Terence Smith, N. Y. Times, Dec. 5, 1971; Iver Peterson, N. Y. Times, Dec. 2, 1971; Darius Jhabvala, Boston Globe, Feb. 6, 1972; on the behavior of ARVN, see N. Y. Times, Dec. 6, 1970; ^{Iver Peterson,} Dec. 10, 1970; ^{Henry Kamm,} March 21, 1971; ^{July 2, 1971; Sept. 9, 1971;} and on and on. ^{in the countryside} The behavior of VC and NVA troops, who depend on the population for sustenance, ^{rather} is in general ~~different~~ different, so far as is known.

Sydney Schanberg

86 T. D. Allman, "The blind bombers," Far Eastern Economic Review, Jan. 29, 1972.

87 N. Y. Times, letter, Jan. 12, 1972. ~~And no matter what the facts may be, there will~~

88 "Lord Russell and the War Crimes 'trial.'" The New Leader, October 24, 1966. The reader who suspects that Hook may have learned something since may turn to the Humanist, Jan. 1971, where he describes the destruction in Vietnam as ~~the~~ "the unintended consequences of military action."

89 Rather consistently. Thus in the same (1966) article, Hook refers to the U.S. Dominican intervention as an "error" traceable to "mistaken appraisal of the involvement of foreign Communist regimes."

90 ~~Joseph B. Treaster~~ Joseph B. Treaster, N.Y. Times, Feb. 9, 1972, in a discussion of the fierce anti-Americanism of the students of Hue. American and British writers who have uncritically accepted U.S. government propaganda on Hue might ask themselves what might be the reason for the fierce anti-Americanism evident there. See note 8.

91

"End of Either/Or," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 45, January 1967. ^{My} ~~the~~ reference is inexact, since Bundy ^{seemed to} ~~regard~~ anyone who disagreed on more than tactical matters ^{as} ~~was~~ a wild man. Earlier, ~~mentioned~~ "the McGeorge Bundy group" (which included McNaughton, Cooper, and Unger) drafted a memorandum (Feb. 7, 1965; III, 309) which "represents a highly personal Bundy assessment and point of view", and which notes that "None of the special solutions or criticisms put forward with zeal by individual reformers in government or in the press is of major importance..." The Americans in Vietnam are the "first team," and though some of their tactical decisions may not have been perfect, clearly only a wild man in the wings ~~would dare to~~ question the first team in any more fundamental way.

91a

N.Y. Times Magazine, Oct. 4, 1970, p. 89. Five years earlier he wrote in the same place: "I would say the war in South Vietnam changed irrevocably on Feb. 19, 1965...[when]...America began using its immense air power...[to]...bomb South Vietnam" (In the Name of America, p. 174). The same source contains many other reports by American correspondents on the "hundreds of air strikes every day against villages and other targets 'suspected' of harboring the Viet [#] Cong in cases where there is no ground engagement" (Raymond Coffey, p. 181), the pattern of forced refugee generation by bombs and shells, etc. Recall the claims of General Tidwell, at note 87.

91b

Reuters, N.Y. Times, March 18; In the Name of America, p. 185.

91c

In the Name of America, Stanley Karnow, New York Herald Tribune, Dec. 28, 1964; ~~_____~~ p. 184-5. Karnow blames the Viet Cong, whose presence led to the attack, and who within a week were "sanctimoniously denouncing 'this monstrous crime...'" Though convinced that the Viet Cong ^{denunciation} ~~_____~~ was "sanctimonious," he does not address the more pertinent question: was it correct?

It might, incidentally, be noted that ~~_____~~ ARVN forces ^{commonly used} ~~_____~~ villagers, including children, specifically ~~_____~~ to draw enemy fire. See the August 1965 news report cited by ³²

Herman, Atrocities in Vietnam, p. 31-2. The U.S. has since refined this strategy.

~~Indigenous troops~~ ^{are used} (to establish contact with the enemy, then withdrawing ~~away~~ (if possible) so that the area can be plastered with an air and artillery barrage. Sometimes, as in the Laos invasion of 1971, the tactic partially backfires, and the "friendly" forces are decimated as well. ~~Indigenous troops~~

91d Alain Enthoven and Wayne Smith, How Much is Enough?, Happer and Row, 1971, pp. 305-6

^{Cited} in Cornell Air War Study (see note 77), which gives the estimates cited, p. 4-8.

~~Cornell Air War Study (see note 77), p. 4-8, referring to a study done for the~~

~~Pentagon Office of Systems Analysis.~~ On the rise in Viet Cong recruitment, generally attributed to unrestricted bombing, see references in American Power and the New Mandarins, chapter 3, note 11, p. 276. Similar reports are common from Laos (see Branfman, in Adams and McCoy, op.cit., p. 241) and Cambodia (see Richard Dudman, 40 Days with the Enemy, Liveright 1971; Boris Baczynskyj, "Bombing turns Cambodian villagers into refugees," Dispatch News Service ~~International~~ International, Feb. 21, 1972, citing, e.g., the case of a man who joined the Communists a few days after an aerial attack left 50 dead in his native village). ~~Indigenous troops~~

92

Both reports are cited, with further quotes, in American Power and the New Mandarins, pp. 285, 335-6. More than half the total tonnage dropped on South Vietnam has been delivered by B-52's, much of it in settled areas. See Cornell Air War Study, p. 4-8; also note 83. For details, see Jonathan Schell, The Military Half, Vintage, 1968, and many other sources.

93 IV, 823

^X George Carver of the CIA, cited above, p. XX. Perhaps it is such comments as these that Chester Cooper had in mind when he observed that the Pentagon Papers make the CIA "look good." "The CIA and decision-making," Foreign Affairs, Jan. 1972, p. 228.

94

Bernard Fall, "Vietnam Blitz." ^{See note 5.)} This, he suggests, is the reason why few weapons are found among the corpses. Note the early date of these comments. The author, incidentally, was extremely well-informed, and no dove. See ^{29.1.1} ~~note~~ (note 131).

94a

IV, 360. Cf. IV, 487, 548. The date of the "first direct troop commitment to the Delta" is given as January 1967 (IV, 389). Jeffrey Race, however, states that a battalion of the 25th Infantry Division arrived in Long An province in September 1966, "the first deployment of an American combat unit into the Mekong Delta," though it was only in February 1967 that "more aggressive tactics were adopted" ^{in Long An} (War Comes to Long An, California, 1972, p. 216-7). NLF losses were high "since the start of serious American combat operations in early 1967" (p. 270). The government "violence program" involved heavy use of air and artillery attacks, which "had a far more devastating impact on ~~the~~ noncombatants than on combatants," accord^{ing} to defectors. During 1968 artillery bombardment became so intense that "large areas of the province looked (in words of one official) 'like the face of the moon'" (p. 236-7).

Race explains in detail how the NLF defeated the US-backed GVN in this crucial Delta province by 1965 (see below, pp. XXf.). Infiltration was "negligible," and the first PAVN ^(North Vietnamese) main-force battalions entered the province between December 1967 and February 1968, for missions against Saigon (p. 211). On press reports of ^{PAVN} ~~NVA~~ troops in the Delta, see At War with Asia, p. 99-100.

95

Jan. 9, 1967. In the Name of America, p. 98.

96

Cf. In the Name of America, p. 384; At War with Asia, pp. 93-101.

97

Naturally, this does not prevent the State Department (or the press) from referring to this as "Hanoi's offensive" (IV, 581).

97a

II, 517.
Typically, the analyst does not notice the absurdity of this formulation, and what it implies as to who was "the enemy."

98

Cornell Air War Study (see note 77), pp. 4-10ff. See Schell, The Military Half.

99

Boston Globe, Dec. 10, 1971; reprinted from the Washington Post.

100

Vietnam Inc., p. 77.

102

"Impact of pacification on insurgency in South Vietnam," Journal of International Affairs, vol. XXV, no.1, 1971.

103

N.Y. Times, Nov. 26, 1969. Emphasis mine.

104

Griffiths, op.cit. (p. 76.) See the references cited earlier for examples and commentary.

105

The Betrayal, Norton, N.Y., 1969.

106

"Epilogue," Journal of International Affairs, vol. XXV, no.2; Eqbal Ahmad, "Revolutionary war and counter-insurgency, ibid., no.1, p. 44. In replying to Ahmad's article Komer does not disavow or qualify the remarks quoted by Ahmad.

106a

"Pacification: a look back," ~~the~~ Army, June 1970, p. 23.

106b

"The ending of the war as a setting for the future development of South Vietnam," Asian Survey, vol.11, no. 4, April 1971, p. 342n.

106c

UPI, Le Monde, Nov. 5, 1971. (Quotes are re-translated, since) I have not come across this UPI report in the American press, apart from a reference in The Guardian by Richard Ward. For ~~more~~ information on ~~the~~ Operation Phoenix in 1968-9, see At War with Asia, p. 301-2 and Herman, Atrocities in Vietnam, p. 47, and references cited there. For some more recent data, see my article in Ramparts, May, 1972, and references cited. (See also Seymour M. Hersh, Cover-Up, Random House, 1972; Race, op.cit.) For a general review of the Phoenix program, see Jon Cooper, "Operation Phoenix," Dept. of History, Dartmouth College.

106d

Reported in Cooper, ~~xx~~ ibid.

106e

See Cooper's ~~study~~ study for details.

107

Condemned to Freedom, Random House, 1971, pp. 75-77, a close paraphrase (with no acknowledgment) of some remarkable passages in Townsend Hoopes' Limits of Intervention David McKay, 1969, on which I have commented elsewhere (At War with Asia, pp. 297-300). Since Hoopes mentions Pfaff in this earlier book, it is unclear who deserves the credit for these insights.

107a

Pfaff adds at this point that "it is not clear that [the Chinese Communists] understand the significance of the claim which Mao Tse-tung has made that China can win a nuclear war in which 300 million Chinese would die." This "claim" has been frequently attributed to Mao in anti-Communist propaganda, but no source has been ~~discovered~~ discovered. Chang Hsin-hai concludes that it "is an outrageous and unmitigated falsehood, which everybody has accepted as gospel truth" (America and China, Simon and Schuster, 1965, ^{p. 227}). (A similar remark attributed to Tito may be the source that has been distorted, he suggests.

108

On the welfare of the Vietnamese under French rule, see Ngo Vinh Long, Colonized Peasants of Vietnam, to be published by the Harvard East Asian Research Center.

109

On the earlier period, see Truong Buu Lam, Patterns of Vietnamese Response to Foreign Intervention: 1858-1900, Monograph Series no. 11, Southeast Asia Studies, Yale, 1967; Tam Vu and Nguyen Khac Vien, A Century of National Struggle: 1847-1945, Vietnamese Studies, no. 24, Hanoi, 1970; David G. Marr, Vietnamese Anticolonialism: 1885-1925, California, 1971; Long, op.cit.

110

Colin S. ~~Gray~~ Gray, "What RAND hath wrought," Foreign Policy, vol.1, no.4, Fall, 1971.

¹¹¹The lucrative US presence ... created a virtual gold mine of wealth which is directly or indirectly syphoned off ~~by~~ ^{and pocketed by the} officials." Compare the situation since. From 1966 through 1971, U.S. economic assistance to South Vietnam has averaged over \$600 million per year; the capital flow from South Vietnam is about 1/3 of this. The recent, ^(heralded as the "autumn revolution") fiscal reforms raised the price of rice, sugar, milk powder and pharmaceuticals, while lowering prices for refrigerators and air conditioners. Rotten rice still sells at blackmarket prices. (Phi Bang, Far Eastern Economic Review, Jan. 15, 1972). For more examples, see Thoi-Bao Ga, Dec. 1971.

¹¹²For some amusing comments on the election provision, see Dennis J. Duncanson, Government and Revolution in Vietnam, Oxford, 1958, p.7-8. He regards it as a subsidiary detail, not a main feature, and claims that apart from the DRV, "everybody else" took the agreements to be merely "a deal to establish peace through territorial concessions." On what "everybody else" actually thought, there is an ample literature: see, e.g., S. R. SarDesai, Indian Foreign Policy in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, Univ. of California, 1968, chapter IV.

¹¹³Quotes and comment from SarDesai, ibid. See also Maneli, op. cit., chapter 2; ~~George Kahin and Lewis; Vietnam: History, Documents and Opinions, Marvin E. Gettleman, ed., Vietnam: History, Documents and Opinions, Fawcett, 1965, Part Five; and many other sources.~~

¹¹⁴1956. Gettleman, p. 172.

¹¹⁵The Lost Crusade, 166.

¹¹⁶Cf. Kahin and Lewis, op. cit., for discussion of this matter. See also Kahin's comments on the history of American-promoted elections in The New Republic, Feb. 12, 1972, referring specifically to the proposals in Nixon's latest "peace plan." See also B. Fall, "Vietnam's 12 elections," reprinted in Last Reflections on a War.

¹¹⁷Thieu Son, in the Saigon newspaper, Dien Tin, Aug. 24, 1971; translated in part in Thoi-Bao Ga, October 1971.

¹¹⁸May 1967; IV, 182. To realize this commitment, natives of South Vietnam who had infiltrated back "should be expelled as a matter of principle" or permitted to remain if they are "prepared to accept peaceful political activity under the Constitution" (which prohibits Communism). He does not add that they must be prepared to obey laws that make "All plots and actions under the false name of peace and neutrality" a crime, punishable by 1-5 years imprisonment (May 17, 1965); see Fall, "Vietnam's 12 elections," and Im Cooper's study (note 106c). See above, p. xx.

¹¹⁹"A successful end to the war in Viet Nam," Pacific Community, April 1971.

¹²⁰"Two American Counterstrategies to Guerrilla Warfare," in Tang Tsou, ed., China in Crisis, volume 2, 283, 291.

¹²¹Dean Rusk claimed in April 1963 that 7 million Vietnamese -- ~~almost~~ ^{almost} half the population -- lived in strategic hamlets. Cited in Cooper, The Lost Crusade, p. 201.

¹²²See Austin, op. cit.; Scott, op. cit., chapter III; Stavins, op. cit.; J. C. Goulden, Truth is the First Casualty, Rand-McNally, 1969; E. G. Windchy, Tonkin Gulf, Doubleday and Co., 1971. These studies raise serious doubts as to whether the Aug. 4 incident in Tonkin Gulf, which led to the "retaliatory" bombing, ever occurred. They make it plain that whatever Washington may have chosen to believe, the evidence for the alleged attack was ~~slight~~ ^{slight} and contradictory, and that subsequent Administration testimony demonstrated either ~~astonishing~~ ^{astonishing} ignorance or outright deception. Even if the attack did take place (with no damage to the U.S. vessels), the retaliatory attack was indefensible, not only because of its scale, but because of the extensive provocation: specifically, GVN naval attacks, with U.S. vessels seeking to draw attention elsewhere, ~~and U.S. attacks on North Vietnamese~~

The Pentagon analyst concludes that the August 4 attack took place and was almost certainly deliberate (III, 186). His analysis, however, is rather superficial as compared with the studies ~~■~~ cited.

123

Vietcong, MIT Press, p. 362.

123a

After the decision to bomb the North, the White House informed Taylor in Saigon that a Presidential announcement was under consideration which would state that the bombing "will be reported to the United Nations Security Council under the Provisions of Article 51 of the United Nations Charter" -- that is, as a measure of collective self-defense -- but the analyst states that this "intention...was dropped several days later..." There appears to be no other instance of any consideration of the legal obligations of the United States.

123b

Recall the wording of the State Department White Paper of 1961, explaining how "The authorities in South Viet-Nam refused to fall into this well-laid trap" -- namely, the 1956 elections agreed upon at Geneva. Cited in Kahin and Lewis, op.cit., p. 58. Throughout, the US executive and its local subsidiaries had to keep stepping lively to avoid such traps laid by the wily Communists.

123c

See. e.g. F. Schurmann, P.D. Scott, and R. Zelnick, The Politics of Escalation in Vietnam, Fawcett, 1966; Scott, op.cit. Compare also ~~Samuel~~ Scott's discussion of the bombing of the Soviet ship, the Turkestan, in Haiphong harbor, with the analyst's reference to "an unfortunate case of bad aiming" (IV, 187) -- possibly the case, though a serious analysis would hardly rest merely ~~by repeating~~ with repeating the government's excuses.

124

See Chester Cooper, The Lost Crusade, 327-8. Also T. Draper, Abuse of Power, Viking, 1967, pp. 167-8.

125

One of the highest interagency priorities recommended in April 1966; II, 582.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

126

See for example the record of the Winter Soldier Investigation, Congressional Record, April 6, 1971, E2826-E2900; The Winter Soldier Investigation, Beacon, 1972; James S. Kunen, Standard Operating Procedure, Avon, 1971; D. Thorne and G. Butler, eds., The New Soldier, Collier, 1971.

127

Described, perhaps, as "the familiar Communist-neutralist bray" (III, 621).

128

Boston Globe, Feb. 7, 1972.

129

Cf. Schurmann, Scott and Zelnick, op.cit.; E.S. Herman and R.B. Du Boff, America's Vietnam Policy, Public Affairs Press, 1966; and many later works.

129a

The "Letter of Transmittal" identifies Gelb as the author ~~fx~~ of the summary and analysis sections (I, xvi).

129b

Kahin and Lewis, op.cit., pp. 119-20. I give here the original, which is slightly different (but in no material way) from the quotation as Gelb cites it.

129c

"The struggle for ~~the~~ unification of Vietnam," The China Quarterly, Jan.-March, 1962, reprinted in M.E. Gettleman, ed., op.cit. ~~_____~~

129d

Devillers, op.cit., citing an interview with Diem in Figaro. The analyst later cites an article by George Carver of the CIA who states that "By the end of 1958 the participants in this incipient insurgency...constituted a serious threat to South Viet Nam's political stability" (I, 335; emphasis his).

130

Cited by the analyst, I, 345-6. The quotes are from Pike's Viet Cong, ~~_____~~ p. 76, and give a fair indication of the general level of his analysis, though the book is useful for the documentation it contains. For a serious discussion of the origins of the ~~_____~~ NLF see Jeffrey Race, War Comes to Long An, ~~_____~~

131

Honey is an extreme anti-Communist whose fanaticism on the subject leads him to outlandish statements. ~~_____~~ See my American Power and the New Mandarins, chapter 3, note 71, p. 290, for ~~an~~ examples. While Honey is described merely as an authority or an expert, Burchett is identified as "the Communist journalist Wilfred Burchette" (sic; IV, 207⁽⁵¹⁾). Another adherent of the view that internal development ~~not creation of the NLF~~ was the primary concern of the DRV through 1960 was Bernard Fall ^(Last Reflections on a War, _____) ~~_____~~ ^(p. 203). Fall too is no critic of the war in Gelb's sense; he was a bitter anti-Communist who took seriously the "impressive international testimonials to the [GVN's] viability and to the validity of its claims to represent the Vietnamese people as a whole", while noting that these "proofs...have no bearing whatever on the question of the allegiance of the farming population..." (The Two Viet-Nams, revised edition, Praeger, 1964, p. 205). To take another example (postdating Gelb's account), Arthur Dommen maintains that ^{only} ~~at~~ the Sept. 1960 Congress the Lao Dong Party "decided to ~~embark~~ on the struggle for the South" (Conflict in Laos, p. 394). ~~As to Dommen's views, he _____ believes that "U.S. policy-makers _____~~ were of one mind in regarding Hanoi's behavior as a direct challenge to the traditional

American belief that justice will prevail in the world. It is only against this background of a tradition of fair play and justice that the American commitment of half a million men to the Vietnam war can be understood" (p. 381). Moreover, ~~the North Vietnamese goals in Laos include~~ progressive taxation, moves towards economic equality, discouraging the conspicuous consumption that establishes a wealthy villager's status; these are part of "the price to be paid for liberation" (p. 359-60). at the hands of the North Vietnamese or the Pathet Lao, in Dommen's view. ~~In such passages, Dommen~~ expresses quite openly ~~his~~ his almost religious belief in the purity of American goals and the unquestionable virtue of inegalitarian ideology, which could only be challenged by vicious ~~the~~ Communists.

The point is that ~~the~~ commentators ^(of widely varying views, including many) who are deeply committed to the U.S. government position (though they ^{may} lament its errors and failures), adopt the position that Gelb attributes to "critics of U.S. policy," ~~the~~ The question then arises why Gelb identifies the views that he tries to show erroneous as an anti-U.S. government position. ~~We~~ We return to this question directly.

131a

"Diplomatic and strategic outcomes of the conflict," in Walter Isard (ed.), Vietnam: Issues and Alternatives, Schenkman Publishing Company, Cambridge, 1969, vol. X of the publications of the "Peace Research Society (International)," an organization concerned (as the editor puts it) with research directed "to decrease the probability that poor decisions by good-intentioned leaders and policy makers -- as has characterized the foreign policy of U.S. and many other nations -- will be avoided" (sic) in what he describes as "the game of world domination."

131b

N.Y. Times, June 7, 1965; cited in American Power and the New Mandarins, p. 243, 282-3.

131c

A recent survey of the Saigon land-reform shows that it is progressing primarily in areas where "the Viet Minh and the Viet Cong broke the landlords' hold years ago," so that the program "appears to some merely to confirm a distribution of land already made by the Communists." Where the Communists had not succeeded in breaking the power of the landlords, "landlords have intimidated their tenants and made deals with local officials" and land-reform is not moving forward. The land-reform differs from that of the Communists in that it excludes farm laborers, the poorest peasants. Daniel Southerland, Christian Science Monitor, April 1, 1972. Though it owes such success as it has achieved to the Viet Minh and Viet Cong, the program is hailed by propagandists as a

major accomplishment of the US and GVN. See also Race, *op.cit.*, p. 272-3, and p. XX, b.

132

Laos: Buffer State or Battleground, Oxford, 1968, pp. 127f., 139, 149. A UN Commission was unable to substantiate charges by the Lao government that there was a North Vietnamese invasion. Arthur Dommen ^{maintains} that "the fact that the subcommittee did not report that there were no North Vietnamese troops in Laos is significant" (p. 124), but is unwilling to go beyond that.

133

North Vietnam and the Pathet Lao, pp. 68-9. This book is an attempt to make the case for North Vietnamese control of the Pathet Lao. I have discussed it, in its earlier incarnation as a RAND report, in At War with Asia, chapter 4, along with other RAND reports by these authors. The book is interesting primarily because of the limited nature of the evidence, the failure of the authors to ^{and its unreliability -- see note 48.} what much of their evidence suggests, ^{It is of interest that University} their clear bias, Presses have been willing to publish such books as this (described by Harvard Press as a "dispassionate" study) or those of Douglas Pike (MIT) -- works with factual content though unconcealed advocacy of U.S. government positions on rather controversial contemporary issues -- though they would not dream of considering, say, the record of the Russell Tribunal. Perhaps this is no more strange than the fact that an NBC "news" program of almost an hour ^{on the war} in Laos (March 24, 1972) was content with a single mention of the Pathet Lao (namely, a statement that their strength had decreased, for reasons unreported), otherwise describing the war as a conflict between the North Vietnamese aggressors and the Laotians, aided by the U.S., whose only wish is to enable the Laotian people to choose their own form of government. Only a sentimentalist would expect something different from the nation's universities.

134

For background, in addition to the references cited earlier, see J. Mirsky and S.E. Stonefield, "The United States in Laos, 1945-62," in E. Friedman and M. Selden, eds., America's Asia,

134a

Charles A. Stevenson, The End of Nowhere: American Policy Toward Laos since 1954, Beacon, 1972, p. 73.

135

Barely noted in the Pentagon Papers. Book 10 of the Government Edition contains some relevant documents. For example, an intelligence analysis of December 1958 indicates that the NLHS (the political arm of the Pathet Lao) "appears to be making strong gains in almost every sector of Laotian society" after the electoral victory (1172), and ~~the~~ an NSC report a few weeks later ^{mentions} ~~reports~~ the civilian introduction of U.S. military officers "in ~~military~~ clothing" (1165; January 1959; both facts commonly noted elsewhere). In an appendix, Stevenson reviews the Pentagon Papers documentation with reference to Laos. See also Jonathan Mirsky, "High Drama in Foggy Bottom," Saturday Review, Jan. 1, 1972, for comment on this matter.

136

I.F. Stone's Weekly, Feb. 27 and March 6, 1967, from which the information given here is taken. Much of his evidence derives from reporting by Raymond Coffey, one of the small group of U.S. correspondents who, over the years, refused to be fooled.

137

The N.Y. Times - Bantam account (op.cit., see note 29; p. 525) repeats President Johnson's claim that the renewed bombing was a response to the "unparalleled magnitude of the North Vietnamese supply effort," mentioning none of the facts just cited, though the Times had carried some of this information. See "Vietnam Cease-Fire Ends Without Sign of Extension," Special to the N.Y. Times, datelined Saigon, Feb. 12, which cites reports from correspondents in the provinces north and northwest of Saigon that "the highways were much more crowded than usual with United States convoys," and also notes that U.S. military officers confirmed "that they were moving extraordinary amounts of food, fuel and ammunition to forward positions."

138

The Lost Crusade, p. 362.

138a

Joseph Buttinger, Neues Forum, Vienna, 1966, cited by E. Herman, Atrocities in Vietnam, ~~_____~~ p. 22.

138b

M. Maneli, op.cit., ~~_____~~ p. 32, referring to the findings of the ICC.

138c

The actual US-GVN attitude towards the Geneva settlement is revealed not only by the rejection of the central elections provision -- contrary to Gelb, the most severe violation of the status quo established at Geneva -- but also by the violent repression of the Viet Minh. Article 14c of the Accords protects individuals and organizations from reprisal or discrimination on account of their activities during the hostilities. The repression of the anti-French resistance not only reveals the US-GVN attitude towards the Geneva Accords, but also exhibits quite clearly the character of the new regime.

"Receiving End," in Chomsky and Zinn, op.cit.

138d

See ~~pp. XX-X, XX~~ p. XX-X, above; the discussion of NSC 5429/2, Aug. 1954, and the Lansdale reports cited there. For further information, see Wilfred Burchett, "The Behavior of France after Geneva was, incidentally, almost as deplorable as that of the DRV: "French insistence on strict legal interpretation of the Geneva Accords was one example of accommodation thinking" (I, 221; analyst). There were others, hardly less insidious.

138e

Kahin and Lewis, op.cit., p. 74, referring to the bishoprics of Phat Diem and Bui Chu, which, according to Bernard Fall, "packed up lock, stock, and barrel, from the bishops to almost the last village priest and faithful" (The Two Viet-Nams, ~~pp. 154-155~~ p. 154). For accuracy one should also add Fall's observation that an extremely intensive and well-conducted American psychological warfare operation was a major factor in the mass flight.

138f

and the significance of the facts he omits,

What is at issue is the logic of Gelb's argument not an impossible comparison of historically very different revolutions.

~~138g~~

~~To cite an example, selected virtually at random, consider this remark made by a reviewer in the Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Jan. 1972, p. 244: "Since De Gaulle is an unreconstructed radical, he makes no pretense of objectivity." How often does one come across the statement "Since X is~~

138g

Critics of the war sometimes fall into this trap. For an example, see my discussion of Telford Taylor's important book Nuremberg and Vietnam; An American Tragedy, Quadrangle Books, 1970, in "The rule of force in international affairs,"

[REDACTED]

138h

To cite an example, selected virtually at random, consider this remark by a reviewer in the Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, January 1972, p. 244: "Since De Caux is an unreconstructed radical, he makes no pretense of objectivity." How often does one come across the statement: "Since X is an unreconstructed liberal (or conservative, or adherent of capitalist democracy), he makes no pretense of objectivity"?

139

One was captured on August 18, the same day that Hanoi claimed to have shot down a Thai pilot over DRV territory according to the ~~document~~ document confirming the DRV reports (III, 609). See Gareth Porter, "After Geneva: subverting Laotian neutrality." [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

140

These remarks are expanded from my article on the Pentagon Papers in American Report, July 2, 1971. Similar points are discussed by T.D. Allman, Far Eastern Economic Review, July 3, 1971.

141

What is available is reviewed in At War with Asia, chapter 4.

142

See Porter, op.cit. Arthur Dommen suggests that the Meo guerrillas, "sitting astride the natural communication route between Vientiane and the NLHS base area in Sam Neua," may have hampered communication sufficiently to have caused deterioration of the well developed ~~NLHS~~ NLHS infrastructure in Vientiane Province (op.cit., p. 308). He does not go on to point out, as Porter does, that U.S. support for the guerrillas constituted a very serious violation of the Geneva Agreements, from the outset, and ^{was} a major factor in the renewal of conflict.

Paul F. Langer and Joseph J. Zasloff, The North Vietnamese Military Adviser in Laos, RM-5688, RAND Corporation, July 1968. Cf. At War with Asia, pp. 230f. for summary and discussion. The ICC report noted above states that the earlier Pathet Lao complaint is discussed "in a separate message." The British government has so far released only the report investigating the RLG complaint. Perhaps this is another example of the "continued" support for your policy over Vietnam" voiced by Prime Minister Wilson when informed about the impending attack on North Vietnamese petroleum facilities (despite his "reservations about this operation"); IV, 102.

~~...the ICC report carried out a serious investigation of the Pathet Lao complaint~~

144 Fred

Branfman estimates that by 1970 the U.S. had brought at least 10,000 Asians into Laos as mercenaries, in comparison with the perhaps 5000 North Vietnamese engaged in combat ^{in Adams and McCoy,} (op.cit., 266, 278f., where the basis for the latter figure is discussed). Lansdale's report of July 1961 (II, 643f.) describes some of the early stages of these operations. The White Star Mobile Training Teams consisting of U.S. Special Forces personnel, which were introduced into Laos covertly in the last few weeks of the Eisenhower Administration ^{or perhaps in 1959 (Porter, op.cit., p. 183)} (Stevenson, op.cit., p. 185), "had the purpose and effect of establishing U.S. control over foreign forces" (II, 464). Laos was serving as a model for Vietnam, in this and other instances. See the works on Laos cited earlier, particularly Porter and Scott, for further evidence. See also note 48.

Austin, op.cit., pp. 229-30.

145a II, 150. The chronology on p. 117

145a

states that in May 1963 CIA-sponsored covert operations against NVN were authorized.

According to official testimony in the Symington Subcommittee hearings on Laos, the radar ~~main~~ installation at Phou Pha Thi, near the DRV border, was constructed in 1966. T.D. Allman cites "reliable American sources" who give the date as late 1964 (see Stevenson, op.cit., p. 310).

146

Admiral Felt (CINCPAC) had warned of exactly this possibility more than two years before. (II, 83).

145

Austin, op.cit., pp. 229-30.

145a

III, 150. The chronology on p. 117 states that on May 11 1963 CIA-sponsored covert operations against NVN were "authorized," but this appears to be an error, apparently referring to ~~NSAM~~ NSAM 52 of 11 May 1961.

145b

According to official testimony in the Symington ~~Subcommittee~~ Subcommittee Hearings on Laos, the radar installation at Phou Pha Thi, near the DRV border, was constructed in 1966. T.D. Allman cites "reliable American sources" who give the date as late 1964. Cf. Stevenson, ~~op.cit.~~ op.cit., p. 310.

146

Admiral Felt (CINCPAC) had warned of just this possibility more than two years before (II, 83).

147

Introduction to Document No. 96, "The Viet-Nam Worker's Party's 1963 Decision to Escalate the War in the South," American Embassy, Saigon, July 1971. I am indebted to Arthur Dommen for providing me with a copy. The title, of course, is given by the U.S. Mission.

147a

The timing of the "discovery" of captured documents has, more than once, been slightly suspicious. For example, shortly after the exposure of the My Lai massacre a document was "discovered" that had been mysteriously mislaid for a year and a half "purporting to boast that at least 2,748 persons were 'eliminated' in Hue during the Tet offensive (Fred Emery, London Times, Nov. 27, 1969; the document was reportedly found in April 1968 but had been "overlooked"). See note 8.

148 Boston Globe-L.A. Times, June 30, 1971.

149 Cf. An Outline History of the Vietnam Worker's Party, Hanoi, 1970, pp. 123, 181-2, 136; and elsewhere, repeatedly.

150 Obviously, a question arises as to the authenticity of the documents. We know that U.S. intelligence has been planting forged Vietnamese documents since 1954 (I, 579). See note 147a.

151 The first careful study of this matter is T. Draper's Abuse of Power, which is also useful for its revealing analysis of the internal contradictions in the U.S. government accounts, in particular, the remarkable statements of Dean Rusk. See also ^{Falk, et al.,} Vietnam and International Law. Cf. my Problems of Knowledge and Freedom and "The rule of force in international affairs" for further recent discussion,

152 Boston Globe, Oct. 19, 1971.

153 III, 438. This reference ~~confirmed~~ confirmed a report of February 1965. In the appended chronology, the analyst states that "As of late 1964 the supply of repatriated southerners infiltrated back from NVN had dried up and NVN volunteers were coming down the trail" (III, 410). There is no inconsistency. The distinction is between individual soldiers coming down the trail and regular units in military operations. ^{public} Pentagon reports, Chester Cooper's report, and Senator Mansfield, refer to one battalion, rather than one regiment, in ^{April-May} ~~the~~

154 Roger Hilsman claims that in the summer, 1965 it was learned ^{that} at least one battalion of North Vietnamese regulars had entered the South by February, 1965. There is no record of this in the Pentagon Papers. ^{that} Op. cit., note 9, p. 294-5. On p. 293 he states, inconsistently, that fear of bombing "had deterred Hanoi from infiltrating any of their 250,000 regular North Vietnamese troops into South

The analyst refers to the "confirmed presence" in the South of at least one battalion in April 1965 (III, 392). See also the references of note 151.

Vietnam." He also states that there were fewer infiltrators in 1964 than in 1962. This is interesting, ~~_____~~ The analyst remarks that the judgments of a "rise and change in the nature of infiltration" in August, 1964, may have been influenced by the fact that they were expected, in reaction to the "Tonkin reprisals," and that evidence of greatly increased infiltration from the North was an explicit condition for "systematic military action against DRV," which leading officials were beginning to regard as "inevitable" (III, 192).

¹⁵⁵ The French, following a more classical imperial pattern, relied ^{primarily} on mercenaries rather than French nationals, and never sent conscripts to Vietnam. There were about 20,000 French nationals fighting in all Indochina in February 1949, about 51,000 (plus 6000 advisers) in all Indochina as of April 1953 (~~_____~~ ^{000,} Book 8, p. 179; I, 400). Of course, French firepower was a tiny fraction of that available to U.S. forces. See, e.g., note 4.

¹⁵⁶ ~~_____~~ ^{000,} book 8, 190-1. Characteristically, he added that this appeared to be the only way to safeguard Vietnam from "aggressive designs Commie Chi[na]."

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 145, 148., State Dept. Policy Statement of Sept. 1948, cited above, p. .

¹⁵⁸ IV, 488-9. He also points out once again ⁽⁴⁸⁷⁾ that in the Delta, with 40% of the population, the VC effort is primarily indigenous and the North Vietnamese main force units play almost no role (though ~~_____~~ U.S. combat forces were operating). Still, he is able to say that our objective is to permit the people of South Vietnam to determine their own future. On reports of NVA forces in the Delta, see ~~_____~~ references of note 94a.

¹⁵⁹ It might be added that the policy later called "Vietnamization" was recommended in mid-1967 by Systems Analysis; IV, 459, 467. Cf. also 558, option (4); 564.

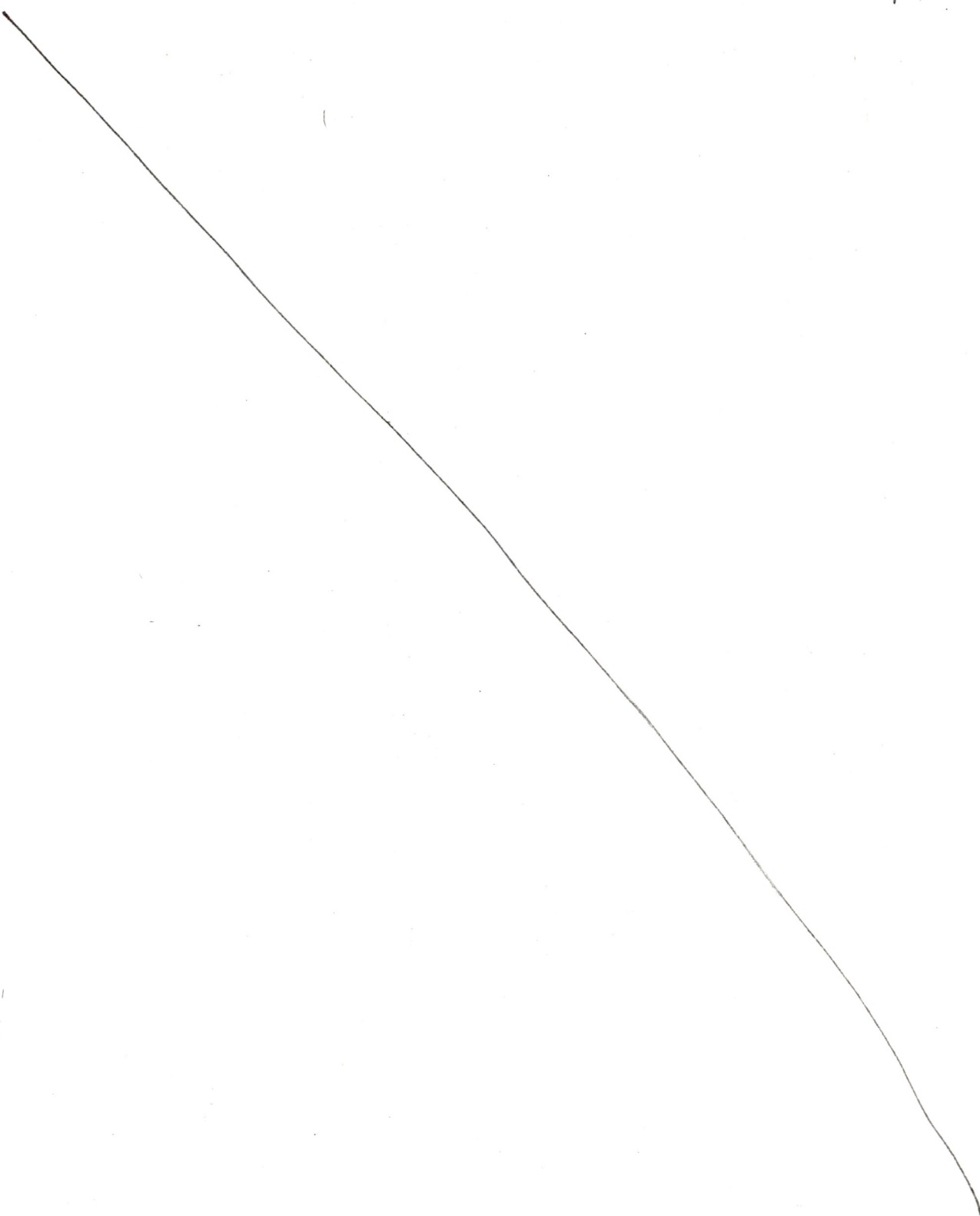
¹⁶⁰ My reasons for believing this are presented in articles in ~~_____~~ ⁽⁴⁸⁷⁾ Ramparts, April, May, 1972. See also Gabriel Kolko, "The Nixon Administration's strategy in Indochina - 1972," Paris World Assembly, Feb., 1972.

~~March 1969~~

27a, 28a

¹⁶¹ Cited from AFP, in South Vietnam: Realities and Prospects, Vietnamese Studies no 18/19, Hanoi, 1968, p. 27.

¹⁶² See King, op. cit., for a detailed analysis. Also Gareth Porter, "The Diemist restoration," Commonweal, 11 July 1969.



163

Cf. in particular, Gabriel Kolko, The Roots of American Foreign Policy, Beacon, 1969, and the discussion in J. and G. Kolko, The Limits of Power, Harper and Row, 1972; my At War with Asia, Pantheon, 1970, chapter 1; The Indochina Story, Pantheon and Bantam, 1970, part III; and other references cited earlier. See also the articles by ~~Dower~~ Dower, Du Boiff and Kolko in Chomsky and Zinn, eds., op.cit.

164

See Walt W. Rostow and R.W. Hatch, An American Policy in Asia, Wiley and MIT Technology Press, 1955, p. 7. In Rostow's view, this "ideological threat to our interest...is as great as the military threat" posed by Communist China and the Soviet Union. It is "essential," Rostow notes, "to emphasize...especially the close link between Japan's dangerous foreign trade problem and the requirements of growth in Southeast Asia" (p.12), and to remove the "illusory glamor" of trade with the Communist bloc, which "represent[s] a powerful attraction" (though an unreal one), particularly to Japan. ^{(46-7).} Furthermore, "The relative performance of India and Communist China over the course of their respective First Five Year Plans may very well determine the outcome of the ideological struggle in Asia" (37). "India and Asia could be won to Communism without a Chinese Communist soldier crossing Chinese borders," ~~and~~ if "the Communist bid to win Asia by demonstrating rapid industrialization" is more successful than development in "Free Asian societies" (51-2). It is also necessary ~~to~~ "to learn to deal effectively with subversion and insurrection ...as now in Southern Vietnam" (7). The book is interesting as the ideological expression of an influential planner of the 1960s, e.g., with its emphasis on our fundamental interest in preserving open societies with no "concentrated power" in the state (4f., 14f.); ~~and~~ ~~other~~ ~~forms~~ ~~of~~ ~~"concentrated power"~~ go unmentioned). For further discussion, see my American Power and the New Mandarins, ~~1972~~ Pantheon, 1969, p. 332.

165

These fears were re-evaluated shortly, when it appeared that China was undergoing an economic crisis, but may well be voiced again in the ~~near~~ future.

165a

~~DOD~~, ~~Government Edition~~ book 8, p. 148, 144.

163 ~~Of. in particular, Gabriel Kolko, The Roots of American Policy, Beacon, 1969, and the discussion in Kolko and Kolko, op. cit.; At War with Asia, Chapter 1; The Indochina Story, part III, and other references cited earlier~~

164 ~~See Walt W. Rostow and R.W. Hatch, An American Policy in Asia, Wiley, and MIT Technology Press, 1955, p. 74. For some discussion, see my American Power and the New Mandarins, p. 332. In Rostow's view, this "ideological threat to our interest... is as great as the military threat" posed by Communist China and the Soviet Union.~~

165 ~~The Chinese have been in a state of economic crisis, but may well be voiced again in the near future.~~

165 ~~Government Edition, book 8, p. 772, 774.~~

166 E.g. by Chester Cooper, "The CIA and decision-making."

167 Compare Ho Chi Minh and Phibun Songkhram, the Japanese collaborator who had overthrown the government of Thailand in April, 1948 after his poor showing in the elections, "the first pro-Axis dictator to regain power after the war" (Frank C. Darling, Thailand and the United States, Public Affairs Press, 1965, p. 65). Support from the United States was immediate, one of the measures taken "to deter Communist aggression in Southeast Asia" (*ibid.*, f. 67).

168 (at best)
It is sometimes argued that "citation of these views [which can now be documented extensively from internal documents as well as the public record] proves no more than conviction, and a mistaken conviction at that," and therefore "the radical argument" that Japanese relations with Southeast Asia were a dominant consideration in American planning can be discounted. ~~See~~ Robert Tucker, The Radical Left and American Foreign Policy, John Hopkins, 1971, pp. 116-7. The argument is an obvious nonsequitur, ~~a particularly clear example of the fallacy noted earlier (p. XX). Documentation of~~

the conviction suffices to establish motive; its accuracy is clearly irrelevant to the determination of motive. Tucker compounds the logical fallacy ^{with} ~~of~~ a factual error. He states that "The radical argument of Japanese dependence on Southeast Asia is difficult to take seriously." This, however, is not a "radical argument" but rather the conviction of the planners; by arguing merely the irrelevant question of the accuracy of the conviction, Tucker in effect concedes the actual "radical argument" while appearing to reject it. To make matters still worse, when he turns to the question whether the conviction was held, he hedges, claiming only that "at least after 1964" one cannot attribute Vietnam policy to this conviction. Again irrelevant, since ^(no one whose views Tucker discusses) ~~no one whose views Tucker discusses~~ proposed that this was the operative factor after 1964. From every point of view, then, Tucker's discussion of this point is entirely inept. It is, however, the only attempt I know of to respond to what Tucker ~~calls~~ calls "the radical argument".

On Japanese - Southeast Asian relations and their significance, see Jon Halliday and Gavan ~~McG~~ McCormack, Japanese Imperialism, Penguin, 1972.

169

The Lost Crusade, ~~Bodd, Mead and Co.~~, 1970, pp. 410-1.

169a

Stavins, Barnet and Raskin, ^{op.cit., p. 20.} ~~Washington, D.C., American Enterprise for Public Policy, 1971,~~

170

See my At War with Asia, chapter 1, for references. For general background on this matter, see John Dower, "The Superdomino in Poswar Asia: Japan in and out of the Pentagon Papers," in Chomsky and Zinn, eds., op.cit.

171

See C. Fred Bergsten, "Crisis in U.S. Trade Policy," Foreign Affairs, July 1971.

172

For data, see Yasuo Takeyama, "Don't take Japan for granted," Foreign Policy, Winter, 1971-2.

173

Or, as he puts it in his caricature, the theory that "United States economic foreign policy is unrelievedly evil." Public Policy, Summer, 1971; Review Article on Harry Magdoff, The Age of Imperialism, Modern Reader Paperbacks, New York, 1969.

{168a cited in Cooper, The Lost Crusade, p. 168. Cf. note 52.

174

On the evolution of U.S. policy in the crucial 1945-50 period, see John Dower, "Occupied Japan and the American Lake," in America's Asia. On the limits of American power in the real world, see Kolko and Kolko, The Limits of Power.

175

Brzezinski, "Japan's global engagement," Foreign Affairs, January, 1972, p. 273; Takeyama, op. cit. For comparison, U.S. firms control about 40% of the British computer industry (Raymond Vernon, Sovereignty at Bay, Basic Books, 1971, p. 240). Excluding table-top machines, IBM has about 70% of Japan's computer market (Koji Nakamura, Far Eastern Economic Review, Aug. 21, 1971).

176

On this and related matters, see Malcolm Caldwell, "Oil and imperialism in East Asia," Journal of Contemporary Asia, vol. 1, no. 3, 1971.

177

Thus the director of USAID for Brazil ~~seems to~~ finds it quite natural, that "we have spent \$2 billion [since 1964] on a program one objective of which is the protection of a favorable investment climate for private business interests in this country," while the total investment is about \$1.7 billion. (Church Subcommittee, pp. 165-6; see note 15.). He adds two other objectives: our "humanitarian interests" and our "security objectives." As to the first, it seems ^{a bit} ~~unusually~~ selective, and correlates ^{remarkably well} ~~unusually~~ with "the protection and expansion, if possible, of our economic interests, trade and investment, in the hemisphere" (165). For example, our humanitarian interest in Brazil, as measured by the aid program, showed a marked upsurge after the April, 1964 "revolution," which among other ~~achievements~~ achievements, overcame the "administrative obstacles to remittance of income developed under the Goulart regime" (ibid., pp. 185-7, 215); another achievement ^{was} that private investment ~~rose from 50% to 75% of total investment~~ ~~rose from 50% to 75% of total investment~~ (p. 208). See also ^{Part I} ~~Newsletter~~ Newsletter, vol. II, no. 3, May 1968; "The Hanna Industrial Complex," NACLA, ~~vol. II, no. 3, May 1968~~ Hanna was one of the major beneficiaries of the 1964 coup. Our humanitarian interest also correlated

31. 80. 21

with the incidence of state violence and torture in Brazil, and with a significant decline in the share of GNP of the bottom 80% of the population

(Washington Post, Dec. 6 1971; some "awkward points" for visiting dictator Medici). As to the security interest, the fear that Brazil might pose a security threat to us seems a bit far-fetched, and as to Brazil itself, the military perceive no external threat to the country (Church Committee Hearings, p. 149), so that the extensive military aid is clearly either for "internal security" or for threats against Brazil's neighbors (in particular, those neighbors who might choose to jeopardize our economic interests). We are reduced, then, to the first objective.

178

Derek Davies, "The region," Far Eastern Economic Review Yearbook, 1971, p. 38; 1972, pp. 37-40. Although he refers to the domino theory as "a flight of fantasy", nevertheless he expresses a moderate version of it in such assessments as these. The economic and strategic significance of Southeast Asia is stressed by many observers. Few would go so far as Peter Lyon, who argues that if some enemy monopolized the region and exploited its resources fully (as Japan could not, in World War II), "then plainly the world balance of power very probably would have swung already in favour of South-east Asia's new hegemon" (War and Peace in South-east Asia, Royal Institute of International Affairs, Oxford, 1969, p. 106). But with qualifications, the point of view is not uncommon.

179

On the British precedent, see Michael Barratt Brown, After Imperialism, revised edition, Merlin Press, 1970; Eric Hobsbawm, Industry and Empire, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968.

180

"Vietnam: the system worked," Foreign Policy, Summer, 1971. See also his comments in the New York Review, December 2, 1971 and in Life, September 17, 1971. It is hard to believe that this is the same person who wrote the summary and analysis section discussed above in section II.

181

Daniel Ellsberg explores in detail the hypothesis that domestic factors, in particular, the effect of anti-communism on ~~the~~ electoral success, predominated in decision-making. "The quagmire myth and the stalemate machine," Public Policy, Spring 1971. ^{Emphasis on these} ~~the~~ (factors ~~are~~ ^{is}) not inconsistent with the imperialist interpretation, if we inquire further into the origins of domestic anti-communism. Notice also that by 1965, questions of long-term motive were of only marginal importance. We were there. Period. See the remarks of John McNaughton (IV, 47), quoted above, p. XX.

182

"Lying in politics: reflections on the Pentagon Papers, New York Review, Nov. 18, 1971.

183

Similarly, Leslie Gelb in the summary and analysis section on origins of the insurgency, notes that ~~the~~ "No direct links have been established between Hanoi and perpetrators of rural violence" in the 1956-9 period. Still he tends, rather cautiously, towards the view that "some form of DRV apparatus" may have "originated and controlled the insurgency" in those years (though "it can only be inferred" -- the reader is invited to sample the evidence presented for the inference; I,243).
~~See~~ See above. p. XX.

183a

Senate Concurrent Resolution 91 of June 25 1954 found "strong evidence of intervention by the international Communist movement ~~in~~ in the State of Guatemala, whereby government institutions have been infiltrated by Communist agents, weapons of war have been secretly shipped into that country, and the pattern of Communist conquest has become manifest..." Cited by ~~the~~ Franck and ~~the~~ Weisband, Word Politics, ~~the~~ p.52; an important study of how ideological nonconformity is defined as aggression by the dominant power in a regional bloc, in Guatemala, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic, in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. In each case, there is a desperate search for proof that the indigenous ~~the~~ elements are agents of the great global enemy. Within each bloc, there are some who ~~the~~ unquestioningly accept the claims of state propaganda, on this matter. See note 89.

184

It is sometimes argued that U.S. policy revealed its freedom from counter-revolutionary imperatives in Yugoslavia and Bolivia, for example. In Bolivia, Eisenhower supported the most right-wing group that had any base of power, successfully, as it turned out. As for Tito, Acheson explained in connection with the possibility of a "Titoist outcome" in Indochina that "U.S. attitude [could] take [account] such possibility only if every other possible avenue closed to preservation area from Kremlin control" (~~book~~ ^{DOD,} book 8, 197; May, 1949). Recall that Acheson had no evidence of Kremlin control in Indochina, illustrating the point at issue.

185

"The Great Asian Conspiracy," in E. Friedman and M. Selden, America's Asia, Pantheon, 1971.
On this matter, see Gittings, *op. cit.* He shows how easily China replaced Russia as the master plotter in official and academic interpretation of Far Eastern affairs.

186

Peter Wiles, "The declining self-confidence of the super-powers," International Affairs, vol. 47, no. 2, April, 1971.

187 William

Condemned to Freedom, Random House, ^{1971,} p. 80.
Pfaff, ~~condemned to freedom~~

188

A Thousand Days, Houghton-Mifflin, ¹⁹⁶⁵
Schlesinger, ~~book~~ p. 769.

189

Robert Tucker, The Radical Left and American Foreign Policy, John Hopkins, 1971, p. 112; Nation or Empire?, John Hopkins, 1968, p. 117.

190

~~The Radical Left, p. 111.~~
~~There is also to be considered underlying Kennedy's observation on preferring a struggle to a Castro, namely, concern for domestic anti-communism. This, of course, begs the question of the origins of this domestic anti-communism, in particular the~~

189a

We need not trace the development of Cuban-U.S. affairs ~~in 1959~~ to demonstrate this point, which is accepted even by those who deny that "Castro was unwillingly pushed into the Soviet camp by American blunders or malevolence" ~~(Ernst Halperin)~~ ^{Andrés} (Ernst Halperin, characterizing the position of ~~Ernst Halperin~~ Suárez, Cuba: Castroism and Communism, MIT, 1967, in the foreword). Thus Suárez points out that Cuba was attacked "by airplanes based along the U.S. coastline" at the time when the U.S. was using its influence to prevent the Cubans from buying jets in Great Britain (Oct., 1959), and adds: "I think this makes it sufficiently clear why, and for what, Soviet aid was sought" (p. 74). The matter is not relevant to refuting Tucker's contention, but it should be noted that a good case can be made that American hostility was a factor of some importance in Castro's shift to the Soviet Camp. See, e.g., Maurice Zeitlin and Robert Scheer, Cuba: Tragedy in our Hemisphere, Grove, 1963. For a general discussion of the background, see Gordon Connel-Smith, The ~~unman~~ Inter-American System, Oxford 1966. He draws the quite reasonable conclusion that "the Cuban government's intention to implement a policy aimed at ending the privileged position hitherto enjoyed by the United States in the island's affairs" made the clash as inevitable as "the growing links between Cuba and international communism" (p. ~~177~~ 170), and also lies behind the fact that "the United States infinitely preferred Trujillo to Castro" (p. 169). Given the vagueness of his discussion, it is unclear whether Tucker would agree with this conclusion. If he would, then his objection to the "radical critique" is of vanishing empirical content.

190

The Radical Left and American Foreign Policy, p. 111-2. Tucker refers to a third consideration underlying Kennedy's observation on ~~preference for Trujillo~~ supporting a Trujillo as long as there is a risk of a Castro, namely, concern for domestic anti-communism. This ^{reference overlooks the crucial} ~~reference overlooks the crucial~~ question of the origins ^{and function} of this domestic anti-communism, in particular the role and purpose of state propaganda. On this matter, see Richard M. Freeland, The Truman Doctrine and the Origins of McCarthyism, Knopf 1972 and ~~William Appleman Williams~~ several essays in David Horowitz, ed., Corporations and the Cold War, Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation and Monthly Review Press, 1969.

On certain similarities, see American Power and the New Mandarins, Chapter 2; also Hilary Conroy, "Japan's war in China: historical parallel to Vietnam", Pacific Affairs, Spring, 1970.

Supporting what might misleadingly be called a U.S. security interest. On the relation between Greece and U.S. interests in the Middle East, see Kolko and Kolko, op. cit., Chapter 8.

M.S. Modiano, "Stans, in Athens, hails the regime," New York Times,
April 24, 1971.

W.Y. Elliot, ed., The Political Economy of American Foreign Policy, New York, Henry Holt and Co., 1955, p. 42. For quotations from this interesting document, and some discussion, see my At War With Asia, pp. 5, 17, 35-8. See Barratt Brown, op. cit., for a historical discussion of this matter.

195

For much enthusiastic discussion, see the report of the SEADAG symposium in Asian Survey, April 1971. See my article "Indochina: the next phase", Ramparts, May, 1972, for discussion of this and related material.

The interests of workers in the host country tend to be overlooked in the study of the impact of multinational corporations. For example, Raymond Vernon, summarizing what is by far the most extensive research into this and related topics, concludes that as a rule multinational corporations generate tensions on the part of "elite groups" (a manifestation of their "powerful psychic and social needs"); the flexibility of the multinationals is "seen as posing a threat for government leaders bent on control, for local businessmen who aspire to compete, and for intellectuals who are hoping to challenge the status quo" ~~para~~ (op.cit., pp. 249,265), but not for workers who are concerned, say, that management can break a strike by threatening to transfer operations to another country. Predictably, unions and others concerned with workers' interests have a different view. See, e.g., Hugh Scanlon, "International combines versus the unions," Bulletin of the Institute for Workers' Control, vol.1, no. 4; and several articles in the preceding special issue on the motor industry. These articles, incidentally, deal with concrete examples, not merely hypothetical concerns. Vernon's failure even to consider this matter cannot, ~~incidentally~~ be attributed to his ~~opinion~~ (likely) belief that the concern is irrational, since he does not seem overly impressed with the "psychic needs" of the ~~multinational~~ "elite groups" he does consider.

It is, furthermore, annoying to see how myths are perpetuated even in serious work such as Vernon's. E.g., consider his reference to the "extraordinary concept of aid to less-developed countries" -- a careful look at the facts would show that this concept is something less than extraordinary -- or his speculation that nations will "continue to emphasize such goals as the redistribution of personal income" (pp. 213, 257). Which nations will "continue" to emphasize such goals? The United States?

196

On this matter, see Kolko, Roots of American Foreign Policy, chapter 1; Richard Barnett, The Economy of Death, Atheneum, 1969, part II; William Domhoff, The Higher Circles, Raddom House, 1970, chapter 5; David Horowitz, "The Foundations," Ramparts, April 1969, and "The Making of America's China Policy," Ramparts, October, 1971.

197

This particular factor is explored by Seymour Melman, Pentagon Capitalism, McGraw Hill, 1970.

198

See At War with Asia, chapter 1, for ~~a~~ some further discussion of the multiplicity of mutually supportive factors, and the stable system they tend to produce.

199

E.g., Herbert Feis ridicules the view, which he attributes without specific reference to Gar Alperovitz, that "the Soviet government...was merely the ~~a~~ hapless object of our vicious diplomacy". The view that Alperovitz actually develops is that "the Cold War cannot be understood simply as an American response to a Soviet challenge, but rather as the insidious interaction of mutual suspicions, blame for which must be shared by ~~all~~ all" (cf. Alperovitz, Cold War Essays, Anchor, 1970, pp. 135, 31; cf. also Christopher Lasch's comments, in the introduction, on "the general failure of orthodox historians to engage the revisionist argument").

200

On the substance of the "Nixon Doctrine," see John Dower's essay in Brodine et.al., op.cit.